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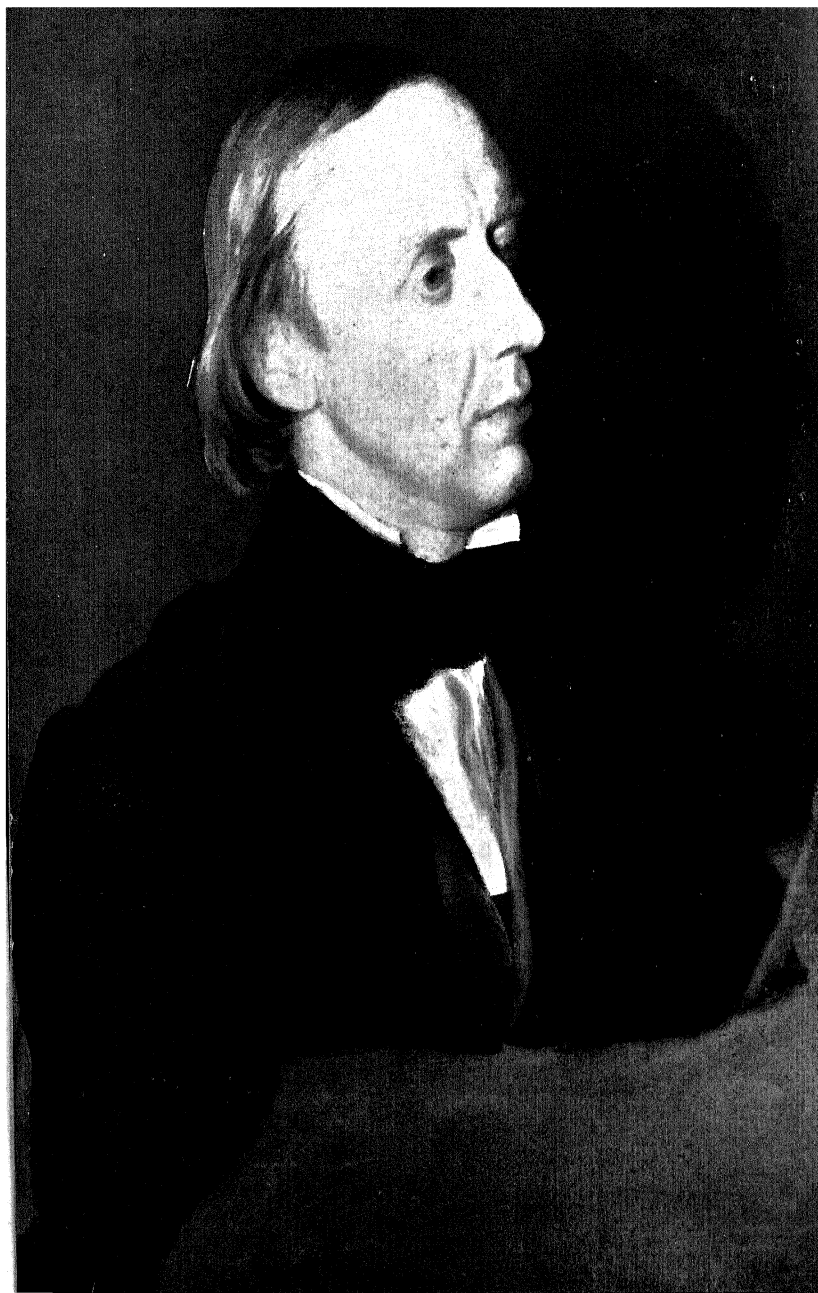
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ONE HUNDRED
YEARS OF
THE HALLÉ



SIR CHARLES HALLÉ

C. B. REES

ONE HUNDRED
YEARS OF
THE HALLÉ
1858-1958



FOREWORD BY
SIR JOHN BARBIROLI



MACGIBBON & KEE

Set in twelve point Monotype Bembo
and printed on Superfine White
Antique Laid, Double Medium 66 lb.
by Jarrold and Sons Limited
Norwich, Great Britain
Bound in Nigerian Goatskin and Sundour
Bookcloth by Jarrold and Sons Limited

This edition is limited to
two hundred and fifty copies
of which
this is No. 92

FIRST PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1957
SECOND IMPRESSION JANUARY 1958
MACGIBBON AND KEE
OCTOBER 1957

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CBRes.

Mr. Zandiri.



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To
John & the Hallé
in happy recurring
indebtedness



Foreword

It is customary for all foreword writers to begin by saying what pleasure the task gives them, and, in this particular case, the word pleasure is very much an understatement, for I bless the perspicacity and vision of whoever thought of inviting my old friend C. B. Rees to write this book. To lead the Hallé in the year of its centenary is an ambition I have cherished since I took the orchestra over in the critical days of 1943; an ambition that has sustained me and my players through periods of great stress and strain. The following pages, however, will tell the story far better than I.

I pause and reflect sometimes to wonder how much the orchestra must have meant to the thousands who have been its devotedly loyal supporters over its long span—not only in Manchester, but since what I might call for want of a better appellation the Barbirolli-Hallé era, when it has become perhaps the most travelled orchestra in the world, to followers not only throughout the length and breadth of this island but abroad as well.

The true function of music as I see it is to bring joy and exultation in moments of elation, and solace and comfort when the spirit is wounded. C. B. Rees is perhaps unique amongst writers on musical matters, in that I know he can still go to concerts ready and willing to receive uninhibitedly the blessings that music can bring. His writing possesses at times a moving eloquence that springs from his poetic and Celtic heart; to which must be added a sensitive sense of imagery. At random I recall a phrase when he was describing Vaughan Williams interpreting a work of his own: 'conducting with a kind of shaggy grandeur'.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HALLÉ

Shaggy or otherwise, I know he will not miss the grandeur or his subject, and to you, my dear C.B., I am content to leave the unfolding of the great story of the Hallé Band, its affectionate nickname in the North.

JOHN BARBIROLI

Introduction

This book is not meant to be a full chronological story of the progress and achievements of the Hallé Orchestra, still less an evaluation of its artistic merits such as might well be written by a music critic. The present writer is neither historian nor critic.

One Hundred Years of the Hallé is a centenary tribute by a music-lover who, by the happy circumstances of his journalistic and publicity work in the last thirty years, has been enabled, on many occasions, to hear the Hallé and many other orchestras on their home ground and elsewhere. He also happens to have had close associations with the home of the Hallé through his work for many years for a Manchester newspaper. News of the Hallé has always engaged in him a lively and, indeed, an affectionate interest. During a period of professional activity at Blackpool, hurriedly arranged journeys to Manchester were irksome preludes to many a memorable musical evening. They seem now, in one sense, to belong to the long-ago; but in another, they remain vivid, especially since the Hallé has formed the much-applauded habit of making London a kind of second home where it is welcomed today—as, indeed, less frequently it was welcomed years ago with heart-warming enthusiasm.

Orchestras, as such, are supposedly 'impersonal' organizations, however brilliant their technique and satisfying their performances. One does not feel that with the Hallé; at least, the writer never has. To begin with, it has a very personal, honoured and distinguished name. Somehow, it exudes a sense of family, giving the keen listener a feeling of more intimate participation than usually occurs on routine concert occasions. This is not, perhaps, a highly 'objective' view. It is not intended to be. A centenary is not an

objective event. It is celebratory, calling for the enthusiasm of the devotee rather than the balance sheet of the accountant.

Normally, centenaries are by sheer chronology an emphasis—proud and endearing, no doubt—on the triumph of age, on victory over circumstances and the dull, grim law of averages. The old lady can still read without her glasses, is still insistent on her hour of television before bed, and is by no means disdainful of a glass of beer. But with the Hallé there is no feeling of surprise (though there is delight) that the score of a hundred has come up on the board but rather a keen expectancy about the future—yes, if you like, about the next century. The opportunity to look back stimulates the natural impulse to look forward. The stern economic facts of recent years have been no more kind to orchestras than to private individuals. The cost of music goes up just as the cost of bread, tea and petrol. This also means that less can be done with subventions. An age of potential abundance is bedevilled by acute stringencies, and a realistic recognition of economic lunacy does not help to replenish the depleted coffers of orchestral organizations. But more of that later.

Let us be content for the moment to proclaim our pride in the existence and activities of the Hallé. It is one of the brightest jewels in our musical crown. All orchestras may—indeed do—look alike in a newspaper photograph, yet each has its own distinctive character, conditioned by many influences: source of origin, immediate environment, public reaction, the power (or weakness) of the conductor, the understanding, or otherwise, of the management—to name but a few at random. You cannot discover the ‘personality’ of an orchestra by adding up the ‘personalities’ of its component parts. The whole can be less than the sum of the contributory parts! There are things uncomprehended by mathematics.

Some orchestras dazzle without making any intimate contact with the listener; others have a hard, cold brilliance that in the end comes near to being repellent; others again suggest a humdrum, routine approach to music-making that cannot charm the ear or quicken the pulse. As has already been indicated, the Hallé wins a

response from the listener that has in it an element of warmth and friendliness, and does not necessarily depend on constant association with its work, though that obviously heightens the character of the response. The writer has been conscious of this since first hearing the orchestra many years ago. It is not a musical reaction as such, and is most difficult to define—perhaps even more so to justify. But there it is—that ‘x’ something, in the relationship of, at best, one listener and one orchestra. Others have been known to feel the same way. In this centenary tribute, therefore, the personal note will inevitably be faintly audible, possibly more than faintly.

The future of the Hallé, the ensuring of the conditions which alone will enable it to add fresh lustre to its name, are the concern not only of the people of Manchester and of the North, but of all lovers of orchestral music throughout the country.

Before the advent of broadcasting it was natural to think of the Hallé as Manchester’s own cherished possession. Nothing can fundamentally alter that proud basic fact. For those not fortunate enough to live within easy access to the old Free Trade Hall, opportunities to hear the orchestra were few, difficult, and often costly. Even then journeys from London or Birmingham or Cardiff were not so inexpensive as to be lightly undertaken. Topographical segregation may concentrate the feeling of responsibility for the support of an orchestral institution, but beyond a comparatively narrow area it could not be expected that people should be sharply conscious—if at all—of that particular organization. ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ ‘Yes, but where on earth does he live?’

But broadcasting and television have brought the Hallé into the homes of the entire nation. Musical pleasure is ‘in widest commonalty spread’. And in that sense the Hallé Orchestra belongs to us all. People who were long unaware of its existence, living hundreds of miles away, now discuss at that same distance ‘last night’s performance’, as critically and with as much enthusiasm as if they had been present in the flesh. The fact of the unseen audience of (hitherto) unimagined dimensions has revolutionized

the musical picture. At the same time Manchester's jealously cherished ownership is not merely undiminished thereby but truly enhanced; its widely shared musical treasures are multiplied in value by their generous distribution among those who care for great music.

It needs no imagination, then, to prophesy that the music-loving public, throughout the country, will join with their Manchester friends in delighted congratulation during the centenary commemorations of the world-famous Hallé Orchestra. For the players this landmark in history will have its own exciting significance. And who can explore what it means to the man whose name and fame are now inseparable from the Hallé—Sir John Barbiroli? The orchestra as we know it today is his creation. He lives for it and through it, and in it. Mention it and it is as if another galvanic battery has begun to function inside him. He grips your arm after the concert, wrought up with exertion and emotion. 'They played well, didn't they?' At that moment he is the devoted 'father' of these so good children (whatever pains they gave and received a few hours earlier at rehearsal!).

The anxiety caused by his illness and operation in the summer of 1956 gave the measure of the affection he evokes, near and far. The disappointment of the Promenade audiences in London at his absence from the rostrum that season during the Hallé's week at the Royal Albert Hall was acute. He has made the 'country cousins' from the North, to quote a phrase he once used in a speech to the London Promenade audience, the most welcome guests imaginable in the Metropolis.

One of the most moving experiences of my concert-going life occurred in December 1956. It was on a Saturday afternoon—a damp and foggy afternoon—at Belle Vue, Manchester. The programme: Handel's *Messiah*. The huge arena of the circus was packed. Not a seat remained in this strange venue for the most popular oratorio in the world. Sir John was making his first appearance in Manchester since his operation. As he walked slowly from the Ringmaster's Room, which on these occasions houses the conductor, to the rostrum, the chorus, orchestra and soloists

INTRODUCTION

and the audience stood in glad welcome to the slim, small figure and burst into prolonged, vociferous, heartfelt greeting. Sir John was obviously deeply touched by this tremendous demonstration of affection. It was not surprising that the performance of that great masterpiece was something long to be cherished. There had been a similar scene in Sheffield on the previous night. Equally significant were the comments one heard from members of the orchestra, especially the older ones, expressing deeply-felt pleasure at the return of the 'chief'—or, rather, 'John', as they said, and as you expected them to say. The family reunion was complete, and it was not unfitting that the happiness it evoked in players, singers and audience should be crowned by the glorious strains of Handel. It was worth a long journey to witness such a home-coming and to hear such music discoursed with such love and passionate dedication.

Such an atmosphere conduces to fine achievement. That there must be vicissitudes and crises over a hundred years is inevitable. Musical and orchestral life does not differ from the pattern of other life. Just as there are conflicts and discords in commerce, industry and politics, so there are in music. Artists are not notable for supine tranquillity! Growth and development cannot be achieved without pains.

But what has brought the Hallé Orchestra to its centenary is not only the vitality inherent in its being but also the integrity of its musicianship; not only its invincible will to endure but also its deep, assured awareness of its mission.

Let us praise it with devoted pride, and cherish it with rightly jealous zeal.

JULY, 1957

The Era of Charles Hallé

It is not recorded that any ripple disturbed the surface of life in Manchester on 11 April 1819—at any rate, not as the result of the birth of Charles Hallé. It was Easter morning, and the church bells were ringing in the little town of Hagen, in Westphalia. The baby's father, Frederick, was a church organist, music leader, and directed the music for the local concerts. His mother, Caroline, was an enthusiastic, but not a professional, musician. As a child Charles was physically weak and medical opinion did not give his life an optimistic prognosis. But like many others, especially those who eventually undertake strenuous physical and mental work, undergo considerable nervous stresses, and reach eminence in their careers, he completely falsified the doctors' gloomy expectations. Tenderly cared for, the child grew stronger and, in a stimulating musical atmosphere, so quickly showed his aptitude that, when he was four, he played a sonata, written for him by his father, at a local concert. Music flourished in the small town in amateur activities of various kinds, but most impressively in the orchestral concerts conducted by Hallé senior. The young Hallé became acquainted with Haydn's, Handel's and Spohr's oratorios at the regular meeting of the 'Gesang-Verein', played the kettle-drums in the orchestral concerts and also learnt to appreciate some of the great symphonies and chamber works. When he was seven the news of Beethoven's death moved him to tears.

He was profoundly influenced, when he was nine, by hearing and meeting Spohr at Cassel, where at the composer's instigation the boy gave a concert, playing piano pieces. But his wise father did not succumb to the temptation to exploit young Charles as a prodigy. Music was too serious and important for that kind of commercialization. Private study, not public sensation, was the

sound watchword in the Hallé house. But it was not to be uninterrupted study, for he was asked to deputize for his father, who was ill, as conductor of a series of operas staged in his home town by a troupe of travelling artists, and so the youngster of eleven directed performances of a number of operas which included *Die Zauberflöte*, *Der Freischütz*, *Zampa*, *Fra Diavolo* and others. Good training indeed for the future founder of the Hallé Orchestra! Later he was sent to Darmstadt to study with the organist Rinck and to Paris with the pianist Kalkbrenner.

But it was Paris that became important to him, although he found that Kalkbrenner no longer took pupils. However, the law of compensation was not slow to work, and accepting a dinner invitation, following an introductory letter, he found himself sitting next to Chopin; and on the same night heard him play. This tremendous experience—it was nothing less to him—drove the idea of teachers out of his mind, and, instead, he shut himself up in his room to practise the piano with a kind of inspired intensity. For one who was to become a notable concert pianist the influence of and the direct personal contact with Chopin had a decisive and dominating character. Liszt he also heard and, though the incredible virtuosity of the man overwhelmed the young Hallé, he was not blinded to features of musicianship which, in his view, were not above reproach or, certainly, criticism. The Paris period gave Charles exciting opportunities to meet Stephen Heller, with whom he formed an intimate and stimulating friendship and who played for him in Manchester; with Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Paganini and other famous figures (from the worlds of literature and painting as well as music), life in Paris was full of intellectual and musical stimulus for Charles Hallé.

It was not until he was twenty-four that he first visited England, and it was not the happiest of occasions. He was invited to play at a Philharmonic Society concert and to perform a work by one of its directors. This he declined to do and thus did not appear at all. But he participated in a concert in the Hanover Square rooms, in company with Clara Novello, Balfe and Sivori. The occasion was not a success, and when he returned to Paris after a few weeks it

was with the determination never to visit England again—the England that was to become his loved home. Meanwhile, Hallé's reputation as a pianist had been growing steadily. In Paris in 1847 he inaugurated a series of chamber concerts which met with enormous success, and some of the works played—by Mendelssohn and Schumann—were until then unknown to the distinguished audiences that flocked to the 'Salle du Conservatoire'.

In the following year, after only two of the concerts in the second season had been given, Paris was gripped by the Revolution. Music stopped, pupils disappeared. Hallé realized that it was impossible for him to remain in Paris, and began to turn his eyes, no doubt with some reluctance, towards London. Just at this moment he was offered the secretaryship at the French Embassy to the German Diet in Frankfurt by M. de Soligny who had been chosen Ambassador, but who apparently never got so far as to occupy the post. After much cogitation within the time limit of twenty-four hours Hallé decided that music must be his life and London his next goal, *en route*, although he did not know it, for Manchester.

Leaving his family behind him for the time being, Charles Hallé, depressed and apprehensive, set out for England in March 1848. In London, his first call was on his great friend Berlioz, who had been engaged to conduct opera at Drury Lane. But all was not as black as it seemed. Since his first visit to London Hallé's position in the musical world had been powerfully enhanced and engagements which he once had to solicit were now offered him without hesitation. Costa, who was giving orchestral concerts at Covent Garden, invited him to play Beethoven's E flat Concerto at what was, in his view, his first public appearance in England. Opportunities for chamber music with the Musical Union followed. The policy of the organization was then so conservative—the wind had apparently to be tempered to the shorn subscribing lambs—that Beethoven's Piano Sonatas were regarded as impossible fare. Hallé, however, overcame prejudice by shrewd caution. An interesting commentary on musical taste at the time! Soon pupils were knocking at Hallé's door, some of whom, like

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himself, had fled Paris, and more important, Manchester comes into the picture. An influential figure in Manchester, Herman Leo, a calico-printer, came to London to suggest to Charles Hallé that he should go to live and work in Manchester; told him that Manchester was 'ripe to be taken in hand', and that he was the man to turn potential interest and love for music into actual and active enthusiasm and support. He was a persuasive advocate. Manchester was unknown territory to the newcomer. He knew only that it was big and that it was wealthy. But he agreed to go, provided a rota of pupils could be guaranteed and that the summer season could be spent in London. So Charles Hallé arrived in Manchester in 1848, when he was thirty years old, and, as he wrote in his autobiography, was most kindly received, especially by the German colony which was prosperous and important. At that time the oldest and most important musical organization in Manchester was the 'Gentlemen's Concerts', founded in 1774 by amateurs who made up the 'orchestra' and all of whom played the flute. By 1848 the situation was radically different. The Gentlemen's Concerts had a modern orchestra and the programmes boasted the names of many celebrities. What of the orchestra? I quote from *Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé*, where he refers to the first concert he attended:

'... I was fresh from the "Concerts du Conservatoire", from Hector Berlioz's orchestra, and I seriously thought of packing up and leaving Manchester, so that I might not have to endure a second of these wretched performances. But when I hinted at this my friends gave me to understand that I was expected to change all this—to accomplish a revolution, in fact, and begged me to have a little patience. . . .'

He embarked on a series of six chamber concerts in the winter of 1848, for the first concert of which three single tickets were sold. But the enthusiasm of small audiences kept him from despondency. The public had to be educated—a slow and painful process. Next year the number of subscribers was nearly trebled—from sixty-seven to one hundred and ninety-three. As for the musical

scene in general, it must be realized that only the extraordinary vitality of the Gentlemen's Concerts could have ensured their continuity, and that the love of music which they nourished and enhanced persisted in spite of social, political and economic ferment. At the time of Hallé's appearance in the North, regional German influences on music-making were strong—witness the Liedertafel (or male voice choir as we should call it) in Manchester and also in Bradford. The mass of the people, caring little for orchestral music, were devoted only to vocal music. Concerts of 'Music for the People', mainly calling on the voice, had a great vogue. Of course, we must not forget the brass bands, which even today have a large following and have been not inaptly described as the 'working-man's orchestra'.

The orchestral background to Hallé's impending participation in the Manchester musical scene is well exemplified by programmes heard in Manchester at the time, which included symphonies by Haydn, Beethoven and Mozart, overtures and concertos, also drawn from the classical repertoire, a Haydn Mass, arias and so on. On 5 November 1849, Charles Hallé was appointed to the conductorship of the Gentlemen's Concerts by the Music Committee at a salary of £120 a year. He accepted—but with conditions: the band was to be dismissed and reorganization left completely in his hands. First-rate instrumentalists were recruited from London, as well as from the region. It is hard to imagine today that one major change should concern the position of one of the instruments: the double-bass had hitherto been placed standing in the front! The birth of the Hallé Orchestra loomed ahead—if in the remote distance. After the auditions (in London also) and conferences inevitable in the re-formation of any orchestra, forty players had been signed up by March 1850, their salaries varying from £10 to £42, Hallé himself being given later an additional £30 for extra solo and concerto work. The ground for his re-energizing labours at the head of the Gentlemen's Concerts had been prepared, if not adequately, with zeal by the support of Manchester music-lovers, and also by the efforts of his compatriots. Their popularity was such that those who wanted to

subscribe—and only subscribers were admitted to the concerts—often had to wait for years before they could join. Three years after the appointment of the new conductor a scheme was projected to duplicate the concerts for the sake of the disappointed—or some of them. But despite the approval of the committee for the scheme those who were subscribers clung stubbornly to their privilege, and nothing came of the plan.

It was not long before Hallé's impact on the Gentlemen's Concerts, through his own dynamic personality and the rigorous reorganization he effected, revolutionized the situation. Orchestral music began to enter its true heritage. The impact worked both ways, for it convinced the young and enterprising conductor that it was his true mission to cultivate and extend the love and appreciation of orchestral music. A stimulating job became a delightful dedication. Moreover, the amount of work he enjoyed to do—pupils, for one thing, were numerous and took much of his time—clearly proved that the physical constitution of the one-time delicate youth had transformed itself no less than he was transforming the musical world in Manchester. His London engagements were many, and in the winter of 1855 he was asked to conduct a season of operas at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. Among the operas produced—most of them sung in German—were *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Freischütz*, *Robert le Diable*, *Les Huguenots*, *La Favorita*. Artistic, if not financial, success was scored. The venture had its amusing side, too. Hallé relates that when Carl Formes, brilliant as Leporello and Don Giovanni and one of the finest artists of his day, demanded a bottle of real champagne for the role of Don Giovanni, John Knowles, the impresario and manager of the theatre, would not hear of it; he would rather have cancelled the performance. So, on those occasions, Hallé used to smuggle a bottle of champagne under his cloak into the theatre. On another occasion when *Lucrezia Borgia* was played, the chorus singers, among the best of whom the smaller parts were distributed, had a demand to make. Knowles told the conductor when he arrived for the final rehearsal that 'all the *nobles* want half-a-crown apiece'; they numbered eight. The manager, therefore, proposed

to close the doors of the theatre and cancel the performance. Hallé paid them out of his own pocket and all was well, to the delight of Mr. Knowles who never mentioned the matter again!

Nor did Hallé's love for choral music go neglected. He founded the 'St. Cecilia Society', on the lines of the German 'Gesang-Verein', a happy memory of his childhood days. Fifty men and women met weekly for the study of choral music and the organization made rapid strides. Manchester's delight in the music was indigenous and it was with regret that, after many years, Hallé's multiplying engagements made it necessary for him to hand over the conductorship to his friend Edward Hecht, who later was to be his chorus master. Hecht, who was born in Durkheim in 1832, came to Manchester in 1854. His death there in 1887 when he was only fifty-five was a great loss to music.

Chamber music flourished also. By 1853 subscribers to Hallé's 'Chamber Music Concerts' had so much increased that he formed them into a 'Chamber Music Society'. All the seats in the old Town Hall, about four hundred and fifty, were fully subscribed. Famous artists came regularly and fine music was finely performed. But the Society had to be dissolved in 1858 because of the pressing claims on its founder of his orchestral concerts. Two years earlier Manchester had begun to prepare for the 'Art Treasures Exhibition', to be held in 1857, the musical side of which was handed to Hallé. It was from this Exhibition that the orchestra, whose centenary is now acclaimed, eventually emerged. Thomas Fairbairn, afterwards knighted, presided over an energetic committee which assembled a wonderful collection of masterpieces of various arts. Queen Victoria graced the Exhibition, and a host of distinguished visitors invaded from all parts of the country. In order that music should not be overshadowed by the rivalry of other arts, Hallé decided that an orchestra of the highest calibre was a first essential. The orchestra of the Gentlemen's Concerts had certainly improved under its conductor's intensive training and direction, but it did not reach the standard he desired for the Exhibition. He was thoroughly supported in his aim by the forward-looking

committee and given *carte-blanc* to assemble the best available players. Sparing no trouble, he recruited performers from London and the Continent to augment the worthiest of the local instrumentalists. Thirty concerts were organized, with Hallé himself conducting once a week. Public response was magnificent. Many visitors were hearing a symphony for the first time.

Towards the end of the year when the Exhibition closed, the question of the future of the orchestra naturally arose. Was it to be disbanded and another brief but exciting chapter in musical history abruptly closed? Hallé decided to give weekly concerts during the autumn and winter season at his own risk. But it was not until the end of January 1858 that it was possible to give the first concert, at which only a sparse audience attended. The pioneering spirit of the man who had set his hand and heart to this task was not dismayed. Had not the Chamber Music Concerts begun disappointingly before they reaped the reward of courage and devotion? It had to be realized that it was a very different proposition offering the public symphonic music *pur sang* from including it in an Exhibition where there were many other and more assimilable attractions. This was indeed a moment for boldness. Charles Hallé has put it on record that he felt the 'whole musical education of the public had to be undertaken'. He decided then, in the face of much cautionary and even inhibitory counsel from his friends, that he would give thirty concerts and, to put it in a crude but expressive idiom, 'win or bust'. The first programme, in which Beethoven's Symphony in C major was played, evoked unmistakable enthusiasm—from a small audience. The concert incurred heavy loss. The dismal story was so heavily repeated that even the indomitable Hallé began to feel qualms. His pessimistic friends were tapping their foreheads at him. None the less, hope triumphed over doubt and, about half-way through the season, audiences increased; so did approbation. There came the days of full houses. At the end of the series of concerts the Forsyth Brothers, who were the managers, presented the balance sheet. The profits were represented by ten brand-new threepenny bits; in other words, each concert had made a profit of one penny!

That modest coin of the realm can hardly ever have held such significance.

And so the Hallé Orchestra—or 'Mr. Hallé's Band', as it was known in the early years—began its vivid, and as we now gladly know enduring, contribution to musical history.

Hallé was satisfied with his threepenny-bits profits, and thus (wonderfully) encouraged he made arrangements without delay for a second season (1858-9) of twenty-seven concerts (the longest of all), a number which was reduced to twenty in the third season. A subscription list was also opened and was well supported. The concerts flourished: Hallé beginning to reap his well-deserved reward. He proceeded to arrange concert performances of some of Gluck's operas which had been taken off the stage—he had given similar performances of *Fidelio* and *The Magic Flute*. He began this venture with *Iphigenia in Tauris* at the Free Trade Hall, and the work met with gratifying success. The cast included Catharine Hayes, Sims Reeves and Charles Santley. It had to be repeated several times, and was also given in London with similar acclaim. The next work on the list was *Armida*, the printed score of which was in an even more unsatisfactory condition than that of *Iphigenia*. Hallé wrote to Berlioz, who idolized the music of Gluck, to ask if Paris could supply the necessary parts. But although the opera had often been presented in Paris, Berlioz replied that Hallé would be compelled to have the parts copied from the score, as only the Paris Opéra possessed them and they would not be lent. Undeterred, Hallé wrote out the parts himself, as indeed he had done for *Iphigenia*, an enormous labour in all for such a busy man. But there was gratifying compensation for him on 28 September 1860, when he conducted a performance which 'unfolded hitherto unknown beauties to a vast audience'. The libretti of both works had been translated by his close friend Henry F. Chorley, music critic of the *Athenaeum*. *Orpheus* was also produced.

After four years of the Hallé Band's activities, profits had risen from ten threepenny bits to over £1,000, and in eight years to £2,000. In a concert devoted to Beethoven, the 'Eroica' Symphony was played, and the fourteenth programme was made up of music

by English composers. In addition to conducting, Hallé played solos and concertos. Choral music, always a strong card in Manchester, played an important part in the progressive schedules. A well-trained choir—two hundred and fifty strong—which functioned under the title of the ‘Manchester Choral Society’ had then been in existence for over twenty years and added considerably to the concerts’ appeal to the public. In the second of the Hallé Concerts it was heard in the chorus of ‘Fairies’ from Weber’s *Oberon* and in Beethoven’s ‘Choral Fantasia’, the piano part in which was played by the conductor. At the next concert when the whole of the *Midsummer Night’s Dream* music was played, Hallé introduced a singer for the first time—a practice which became increasingly popular. The *Egmont* music of Beethoven (with Walter Montgomery as reciter) and Haydn’s *Creation* were features of subsequent concerts. For the *Creation*, Jenny Lind, Sims Reeves and Signor Belletti were engaged. It is worth noting also that the innovation of explanatory programme notes was made at this time. The great Joachim played the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, and for the last of the season Madame Clara Novello was engaged. The programme carried an announcement stating that the orchestral concerts would be resumed in the autumn with the days changed from Saturdays to Wednesdays. And on top of the twenty-seven concerts an extra one was added, at which orchestra, chorus and soloists gave their service free—a forerunner of occasions with which we are happily familiar today.

The second season was notable for the fact that Hallé produced his first performance of Handel’s *Messiah*. Also in the scheme were eight Beethoven, four Haydn, two Mozart and two Mendelssohn symphonies. Hallé’s unflagging zeal and his determination to raise the standard of public appreciation had put orchestral music squarely on the map in Manchester. The concerts were for the public, not for a private society such as that of the Gentlemen’s Concerts. The lowest-priced seats cost no more than one shilling. The musical picture became more and more attractive. The concerts had their home in the Free Trade Hall, which was opened in 1856, and had double the capacity of the hall where the

Gentlemen's Concerts were held. Manchester could boast a fully professional orchestra, based on the city; an excellent chorus consisting of local voices. Hallé had achieved musical autonomy for Manchester. This was a deeply significant change, after the predomination of vocal music. And not only were the audiences for great orchestral music increased and its appeal extended far beyond its hitherto limited and socially specialized range, but taste and understanding and discrimination, which are so much helped by facilities to listen (to 'see' music being made by trained and expert practitioners), were powerfully aided.

The orchestra itself was led by C. A. Seymour, a local musician who had led and conducted the Gentlemen's Concerts before Charles Hallé arrived on the scene. Seven of the first violins came from Liverpool, London and Paris; the remaining two from Manchester. Nine of the ten second violins belonged to Manchester; Manchester and Liverpool provided the six violas in the proportion of five to one, respectively; four of the five cellos were drawn from London, Leicester and Paris, led by the French instrumentalist Vieuxtemps; in the locally recruited woodwind and brass sections, the first bassoon, Raspi, hailed from Turin; the principal flute was De Jong who organized Saturday Popular Concerts in Manchester; Batley played the bass-drum and cymbals and he was so well known that people in outlying towns often christened the orchestra 'Batley's Band'. Three new players joined in the second season, two violinists from Yorkshire named Iles and Bowling, and oboist Engl, from Vienna.

The orchestra went from strength to strength, and it was enlarged from sixty to eighty. At each concert a work new to the Manchester audiences was produced. Famous players came to join its ranks, among them the Viennese Ludwig Straus, who shared the first desk with the leader, Seymour, for three years, and succeeded him as leader on the latter's retirement in 1875. Straus held the post for thirteen years, and was compelled to give it up by ill-health. His letter of resignation to his conductor and friend breathes a spirit of pride and affection. But he did not lose touch with or interest in the orchestra and showed his devotion by a

contribution of £250 to the foundation of the Pension Fund. He was succeeded by Willy Hess, who was a pupil of Joachim and a prodigy at nine. In 1895 he was, in turn, followed by Adolf Brodsky, who had for many years been adding to a great reputation in Leipzig and who came to occupy a most important place in the musical life of Manchester and the North. Outstanding in other sections were the viola player, Simon Speelman, cellist Carl Fuchs who had been a member of the Russian Imperial Orchestra under Rubinstein, oboist Charles Reynolds, and tuba player Harry Barlow. It is not surprising therefore that a high standard of performance came to be expected—and attained.

Continuing his policy of introducing works new to Manchester, Hallé embarked on Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1873, and it had three performances up to 1895. Bach was well served in Manchester, not least on the orchestral side, whereas Handel, neglected orchestrally, was amply represented by his oratorios. His vogue in England and the love of choral music in the North—familiar choral music at least—ensured that his name had a prominent place in the programmes. Another first performance in Manchester was that of Verdi's *Requiem* in which the famous Madame Albani made her Manchester début. The musical delights proffered by the Hallé Orchestra were not confined to the city. It was invited to Bradford in 1865, a move which resulted in an association with the Bradford Subscription Concerts which lasted a long time. The habit of visiting centres outside Manchester spread. Scotland came into the picture ten years after the first Bradford concert, and a three-days' Festival in Edinburgh, organized by Sir Herbert Oakeley, became an annual event. But, of course, it was in Manchester that the major operations of the orchestra and its conductor were centred, and the orchestral and choral repertoire represented in the programmes over a period of twenty years reaped for the faithful public a great crop of musical riches. It seems odd to us today, who are almost satiated by the opportunities we have of hearing the symphonies of Brahms in London and the provinces (not to mention broadcasting), to think that Hallé, a devoted and eloquent advocate of Brahms, had a hard

struggle to establish this music during his time in Manchester. The great vogue of Brahms had not then begun.

The music of Wagner, on the other hand, was better known—in concert excerpts. The famous overtures had a high place in the programmes, together with orchestral items from the operas. Hallé had first met Wagner in Paris in 1839 when Stephen Heller brought 'a young musician' to the former's rooms, and was told that he needed kindness and assistance. He was unknown to Hallé and his associates; he had applied without success for a job as a chorus singer in a small theatre; he eked out a living by making arrangements for the music publisher Maurice Schlesinger. It was assumed that the young Wagner was probably not fit for any other work. Shades of the composer of *The Ring* and *Tristan*! In view of Hallé's personal friendship with and admiration for Berlioz one naturally looks for performances of his works in the Manchester programmes. The music of Berlioz, as is now common knowledge among concert-goers, was to figure prominently in the musical development of Manchester. His *Faust* received its first performance in its entirety in Manchester in 1880. His overtures and orchestral excerpts from *Faust*, *Harold in Italy*, *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Symphonie Fantastique* were well known and much admired. Hallé's friends were doubtful about the wisdom of his giving the whole of *Faust*, but he had always wished to do so. Much interest was taken in the project, not merely in Manchester and the North, but throughout the country. Eminent musicians took the journey to Manchester to hear it. A rigorous schedule of rehearsals was carried through; the principal singers included such well-known artists as Mary Davies, Edward Lloyd and George Henschel. A magnificent performance resulted and the work was repeated in the same season.

In the following year Hallé took the orchestra and chorus to London for a performance at St. James's Hall with the same soloists. The first success was repeated, and in all *Faust* received sixteen performances during the Hallé régime in Manchester. At the final rehearsal before the Manchester concert Hallé's son was present and he has recorded, in his postscript to his father's *Life and*

Letters, an incident which indicates the conductor's remarkable acuity of ear. When the rehearsal was over, Hallé, referring to the clamorous and exciting orchestral interlude which occurs in the second part, remarked: 'The second clarinet played in E flat instead of an E natural in the eighth bar. I hope he will take care not to do so at the concert this evening.' The enthusiasm that attended the presentation of *Faust* was not repeated, however, when Berlioz's *The Childhood of Christ* was performed in the next season. Hallé had the greatest admiration for it, but it was not until many years later that a performance (under Malcolm Sargent) caught the public ear.

Steadily the entertainment, in the truest sense, and the education of the public proceeded on the highest possible level. That the standard of appreciation in Manchester was acknowledged even abroad and by such distinguished appraisers as the composer Grieg is made plain in one of John F. Russell's instalments of 'A History of the Hallé Concerts' (published in the *Hallé Magazine*). Grieg appeared in 1889 to conduct his Piano Concerto, with Hallé as the soloist. It was Hallé's wish that the famous composer should play his own concerto. According to a musician who was present at the concert, Grieg declined for the reason that 'I do not play well enough for Manchester'. Grieg's wife sang at this same concert.

Mention has already been made of the Hallé Orchestra's visits to London and to provincial cities. The players and their conductor travelled thousands of miles taking music to the people in the course of forty years' intensive work. Belfast, Dublin, Sheffield came to know and enjoy the quality of the orchestra and the genius of its conductor. If he had done nothing but train and conduct the orchestra his labours would have been enormous. How he found time and energy for his pupils, chamber concerts and his solo and concerto work only he knew. Famed as a pianist before he was known as a conductor, it has been estimated that he played solos at nearly four hundred concerts in Manchester alone. When he was knighted by the Queen in 1888, colleagues, friends and his audiences everywhere felt that no musician in his day was more worthy of the honour.

That was also the year in which Hallé married again—his first wife, Désirée, whom he had met in Paris and married in 1841, had died in 1866. Wilma Norman Neruda was born in what is now known as Brno. She had become an outstanding violinist, touring Europe (including London) with great success. Her first husband, Ludwig Norman, a Swedish musician, had died in 1885. Before her marriage to Hallé she had played with the orchestra, and had partnered him in sonatas. She continued to appear at the Hallé concerts after her marriage as Wilma Neruda, and later, as Lady Hallé. In 1890, and again in 1891, Sir Charles and Lady Hallé embarked on an Australian tour, from which they derived intense satisfaction. A large and enthusiastic public took them to their hearts and heard their performances in that kind of rapt attention which every artist covets—and needs. Exhausting as such experiences can be, with their concomitant social engagements, both greatly enjoyed the stimulation of meeting new audiences, and their personal charm and impeccable artistry made for them a host of new friends.

On his return to Manchester from the first Australian tour, Hallé's first task was to put the final touches to the orchestra's programmes for the 1890-1 season, and for its usual sorties to London and other cities. But there was something else that powerfully stirred his interest. He had long wanted to establish in Manchester a College of Music to serve the city and the North of England. What could be done in Leipzig and Frankfurt surely could and should be done in Manchester. In an article at that time he wrote that with his orchestral concerts in their thirty-seventh consecutive season, he had the best reason for knowing that the district was as musical as it was populous.

'It is not, therefore, surprising, that with a population of six million souls, a large percentage of which is musically inclined, there has often been overheard a rumble of dissatisfaction that provision for the proper cultivation of music was so inadequate. True, there was abundance of good local teaching, but there was nothing in the nature of systematic training obtainable nearer

than the metropolis. . . . Even among audiences composed chiefly of artisans and miners, I had again and again been struck by the keen discernment of good and bad and by the unquestionable musical talent commonly revealed. In the cultivation of choral music I had nowhere met their equal. . . .’

He first appealed to directors of the Gentlemen’s Concerts, which was the oldest provincial society in the country. The result was the holding of a representative meeting in Manchester Town Hall on 3 December 1891, to ‘consider the expediency of founding a Conservatoire of Music’. Out of it came the appointment of a ‘large and representative’ General Committee, charged with the duty of framing a Constitution for the College and also with the task of collecting subscriptions. Despite the commitments of his concert season, Hallé was in the forefront of the campaign, speaking, writing, energizing everybody in a manner that would have been remarkable in a man half his age—and he was over seventy! It was announced that the Queen had been graciously pleased to confer upon the College the title of ‘Royal’. Distinguished servants of Manchester in education and the arts lent their active aid to the great project. Sir William Houldsworth, Bart., M.P., became chairman of the large committee, and was subsequently appointed President of the College. Dr. Ward, Principal of Owens College, and Vice-Chancellor of the Victoria (Manchester) University, was made chairman of the executive committee, on which also served Mr. Charles Lees of Oldham, first treasurer of the College, who presented the College building, and Mr. Gustav Behrens, who had much to do with the formation of the Hallé Concerts Society to carry on the concerts after the death of Hallé.

It was essential that the College, although situated in Manchester, should secure the support of other large centres in the North, which were within easy access to Manchester. It was proffered with enthusiastic conviction. A sum of £11,000 was contributed to the founding of the College. To the Lord Mayor of Manchester went a ‘publicly-signed requisition’ for a town’s meeting to con-

sider the advisability of establishing in Manchester, on the broadest basis, a college of higher education in music. The meeting was convened in February 1893, and the committee was able to report that one of the main difficulties, that of securing an adequate building on a central site, had been removed. This was due to the generous public spirit of Mr. Charles Lees, and the building, originally intended for a club and possessing a large central hall, needed little alteration to make it admirably suitable for the purpose it was meant to serve. In October 1893 the College was formally opened. Sir Charles Hallé became its first Principal. Students had to agree to work through one of the various courses of study as directed by the Board of Professors as well as a self-chosen principal study. There was no admission for lessons on only one instrument. Even so, seventy-six students were admitted from the first entrance examination, a number which would have been embarrassingly increased on a 'one-subject only' basis. The College wanted (in Sir Charles's words) 'to make their education comprehensive and sound, if somewhat slow'. It was typical of the Principal and those associated with him in this exciting and progressive development to set the standards high from the beginning. The flourishing life of the Royal Manchester College of Music today is the proud justification of the ideal which characterized its establishment.

The first staff of teachers included Mr. Willy Hess, the Hallé Orchestra's leader, Vieuxtemps, Mr. Carl Fuchs, Mr. Frederick Pyne, Dr. Watson, to whom Manchester owes the Henry Watson Music Library, Sir Charles himself, assisted by his wife's sister, Miss Olga Neruda, and Mr. Frederick Dawson, in charge of the piano classes. Hallé's great aim was to implant in the students the seeds of real musicianship. Brilliant facility alone was not enough; mere cleverness was a snare. He encouraged the students to attend regularly his rehearsals at the Free Trade Hall, and other concerts in the city, so that they should get to know a wide repertoire of the best music. In 1895 Mr. Adolf Brodsky joined the staff of the College in place of Mr. Willy Hess. In addition to a superb orchestra, admired throughout the country, and whose

achievements were also known to music-lovers on the Continent, Manchester was now in proud possession of a great institution for musical education which came to exercise a profoundly creative influence on its artistic life, and on that of a wider area.

In 1895 Sir Charles and Lady Hallé set out on another tour, this time to South Africa. His letters to the family at home constitute almost the only record of the concerts they gave in that country. Sir Charles was now over seventy-six years of age, but his letters exude a sense of boyish enjoyment and undiminished vitality. The weather was delightful: 'This is mid-winter here', he wrote, 'the thermometer standing in the sun at 141 degrees! What may the summer be! . . .' He did not lose touch with Manchester either. The Imperial Hotel at Johannesburg was kept by a Manchester woman, and 'up to the present I have met Manchester people in every place, so that we often say it was hardly worth while to come all this way. . . .' Nowhere in the letters is there any indication of physical fatigue or nervous strain. Hallé was due back in Manchester in readiness for the 1895 season and the winter term of the College, and he arrived early in October. His first concert was not scheduled until 27 October, but before that he and the orchestra went to Liverpool, with Brodsky, to give a concert for the Philharmonic Society. On 24 October he rehearsed in Manchester in preparation for the opening concert. He appeared to be in excellent health and spirits. After dinner that evening he had an apoplectic stroke and died the next morning from cerebral haemorrhage. He was seventy-six.

His sudden death just when he seemed completely fit to tackle another arduous season came as a stunning blow to Manchester and the musical world generally. He had made an outstanding contribution to the life of the city. He was deeply admired and respected, not only by musicians and those whom he had taught to love music, but by people of all classes and professions. The flags hung at half-mast, and the sense of acute and even personal loss pressed heavily on the hearts of thousands besides those who lined the streets mournfully to watch the funeral cortège make its way to Salford cemetery. To Lady Hallé the deepest sympathy

went out, all the more poignantly as she was away in Denmark where, on returning with her husband from South Africa, she had gone to give concerts. Tributes in the press, notably in *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian*, were eloquent and moving, stressing the educational character of his work, his magnificent training of his players and singers, his sympathetic understanding of the music of many schools, the completeness and sincerity of his musicianship. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote, with simple truth, that 'he was a musician in every fibre of his nature, and in the course of his long life he never yielded to the temptation of making money by pandering to the vulgar'.

As pianist and conductor he had made musical history, and made it with sustained integrity. What was shallow and meretricious had no place in his nature. He believed in what he did, in his mission to bring music to the people and help them to love and cherish it. All that has been written about him—which is all that those of us who never had the opportunity of knowing him or were not even born when he died have to enlighten us—testifies to his goodness of heart, his charm as a man, his spontaneous enjoyment of life, his utter freedom from pose or snobbery. He could walk with royalty and not lose the common touch. Queen Victoria frequently asked him to Windsor, Balmoral and Osborne to play to her and the Prince Consort. He had also enjoyed, from his early days, wonderful opportunities of meeting such illustrious figures, in addition to those already mentioned, as Rossini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Paganini, Cherubini, Heine, Ruskin, Dumas père and Ingres. The generous readiness to help friends like the composer Heller when they needed it was characteristic of the inner warmth of his nature. And, also characteristic of dedicated individuals, he possessed, as has been indicated, a stern sense of duty and was not to be easily deflected from a course he believed to be right.

He was a most punctilious correspondent, answering his letters in his own clear handwriting. He never employed a secretary. He could express himself succinctly in English, French, German, and possessed, according to his son's memoirs, a good business brain. He had an alert sense of humour, was a good card-player and,

despite professional calls on his time, an avid reader. About music he was always an idealist, and he never exploited 'personality' either at the expense of the music or to titillate an audience. He had no patience, for example, with the habit, so common today, of conducting without a score. He was not there to give an exhibition of his powers of memory. He pointed out that those members of the public who are moved to rapturous admiration by this habit cannot realize that it is much easier to conduct than it is to play a concerto or sonata without a score. 'The conductor has only to be acquainted with the general outline of the composition and its salient features; then the better the band the easier the part of its chief.' Mr. Reginald Nettel in his *The Orchestra in England* comments appositely that:

'Sir Charles Hallé never resorted to clowning as Jullien did—indeed he had opposition in Manchester from a certain Mr. de Jong who gave monster programmes in the Free Trade Hall at which arrangements by Jullien and Manns were played. . . . The importance of Hallé's work, taking place as it did in the midst of an area of exceptional pride in choral music, cannot be over-estimated, but it has taken many years for orchestral music to come into its own in provincial districts other than Manchester. Hallé himself had to do pioneer work all his life, but it would appear that only in London did he encounter opposition from the enlightened. . . .'

Nettel goes on to emphasize that Hallé had pointed the way to the acquisition of a good orchestral style, a result which depended on directing an orchestra which was regularly playing together, as on the Continent. England had ignored this common-sense truth for too long. In his forty-five years in Manchester, from 1850 to 1895, thirty-seven of them as conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, Hallé had not only established a permanent band and established a tradition which it was possible to perpetuate in and for the future, but he had also set a powerful, motivating example to London and other cities. In the end the pernicious 'deputy' system which prevailed in London was abandoned.

Hallé's single-minded absorption in and devotion to his Manchester concerts were not the least reasons for their vitality during his lifetime. He had a far-seeing mind and the future of the orchestra, when he had passed on, was always in his mind, not that, by temperament, he was inclined to anticipations about his own demise. Life was too full and satisfyingly active. A short time before his death, he met his friend, Marcel Garcia, who was over ninety, at a private view at the New Gallery in London, and said to him, 'Eh bien, nous sommes toujours là, mon vieux.' Garcia's characteristic reply was, 'Je crois bien, nous sommes si occupés nous n'avons pas le temps de mourir.' ('With so much to do, we have no time to die.') Seldom can so sad and sudden a falsification of a fine and courageous apothegm have occurred, for Hallé was dead within a fortnight.

The future of the concerts had been frequently discussed between Hallé and Mr. Gustav Behrens, whose family had founded an important manufacturing business in the northern city. Three or four years before he died Hallé had talked with friends about an idea he had in mind to prevent the possibility of the concerts ending after his retirement or death. It must be borne in mind that the concerts were both owned and managed by him. It would obviously be difficult to find another individual to continue the work in the same way. Men like Hallé are not born every year! Plans were discussed which would involve the building of a new, larger and more comfortable concert hall, and also the setting up of a society similar to the Concert Hall Company of the Gentlemen's Concerts. Such a unique development for this country would ensure not only the continuity of the concerts but the maintenance of their artistic standard. Hallé would be gladly content to hand over and to continue the conductorship as long as he was able. When the time came to lay down the baton, the appointment of an able successor was all that would be necessary. But the scheme did not materialize, as the committee considering it reported to a public meeting in May 1892 that an appeal for funds for a new concert hall was not likely to be successful because of the existing trade depression. This compelled Hallé to withdraw

his offer. According to Mr. John F. Russell's articles on the history of the Hallé Concerts (previously referred to), Behrens had himself decided after Hallé's death that the concerts must go on, and he was prepared to undertake the responsibility. He met Hallé's daughter on the day of her father's funeral, together with the son, Charles, Hallé's solicitor and Mr. James Forsyth. There were differences of opinion. The solicitor, influenced by his view of the risk involved in carrying on without the man who had made the concerts, advocated their discontinuation. But Gustav Behrens stuck to his determination to maintain the concerts, and he and Forsyth, with Mr. Henry Simon, another big manufacturer, and father of Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, were eventually charged with the responsibility for the impending season, plans for which had been completed by Sir Charles. Then for three seasons, beginning in 1896, the three guarantors were to undertake full responsibility. Any surplus up to £500 they would pay to Hallé's executors. By the end of the period a sum of approximately £1,800 had been handed over.

Richter Takes Over

THE Hallé Concerts thus went on, but a crucially important question had still to be answered. Who was to be the conductor? To follow Hallé would be an exacting task for anyone, a task needing a man of the highest musicianship and the power to hold the public that had been steadily and solidly created. To solve this problem the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, of which Hallé had been the conductor for twelve years, was taken into consultation. Both Manchester and Liverpool agreed to approach a man who had a towering international reputation: Hans Richter. He then occupied several positions of paramount importance in Vienna and could not give them up, as it were, at a moment's notice. But he was sympathetically disposed to the invitation, only his commitments at the time prevented his ready acceptance. So he regarded what he termed his 'favourite wish'—to come to Manchester—as temporarily postponed. He was not, of course, unknown to Manchester or to the country generally, for he and his orchestra had been on successful visits. In fact, he had conducted in Manchester a few days after Hallé's death, and had told Gustav Behrens that he had 'never known anything like the responsive character of the audience'.

Guest conductors were accordingly engaged. The first was Sir Arthur Sullivan. His 'In Memoriam' overture fittingly ushered in the new season and a new era in the shining story of the Hallé. One of Sir Charles's favourite symphonies was also included—Beethoven's Fifth. The conductors for the other concerts of the season were: Mackenzie, Barnby, Stanford, Brodsky, Cowen, Henschel, Tinel and R. H. Wilson, the popular chorus master of the Hallé Choir. Then for three years Frederick Cowen was engaged on an annual contract, a decision that met with much

success, especially in Manchester. When, owing to the variability of support in districts outside Manchester, the engagements guaranteed to the players dropped below the normal number, Saturday evening concerts were experimentally embarked upon in order to give full employment to the orchestra. But two concerts of a similar kind in a week—on Thursdays and Saturdays—did not find adequate support and the guarantors decided that a second season on these lines could not be undertaken. The concerts were designed in substitution of a series organized and conducted in the previous season by Mr. Simon Speelman which were of a frankly popular character, in the programmes of which were included ballads, orchestral tit-bits, a well-known concerto, and so on. At the same time as these enterprises, choral and chamber music and opera were all flourishing in Manchester, the latter sponsored by the Rousebey and Carl Rosa companies. One of the impresarios was Mr. G. W. Lane, who became prominent in Manchester as the initiator of the Brand Lane Concerts. The Richter and the Gentlemen's Concerts must also be included. The public did not lack a wide choice. Manchester was a thriving musical centre. The enthusiasm for choral music which Hallé had found in the North was further fostered by Cowen, himself a distinguished composer, particularly of choral works. In his first season he gave the Hallé public the opportunity to hear for the first time several British choral works, including Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens*, Stanford's *The Revenge*, Purcell's *Te Deum*. The first performance in Manchester and the second in this country of Berlioz's opera *The Trojans at Carthage* was due to him; it was in Liverpool that he had given the first performance earlier that year (1897). He introduced concerts devoted entirely to Wagner excerpts. They were immediately popular, as at one time similar Wagner nights were a great vogue at Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts. Manchester got to know quite a lot of Wagner at this time. Before he came to Manchester Cowen had made a reputation as a symphonic composer—he wrote six symphonies, of which the most popular was the 'Scandinavian', the third in the sequence, and dedicated to Richter. As conductor

he succeeded Sullivan at the Philharmonic Society in London. As conductor of the Hallé he was also conductor for the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, the Bradford Festival Choral Society and Subscription Concerts, the Hallé Orchestra being employed by these important northern organizations.

In the year of 1898 a fresh stage in the story of the Hallé Concerts was reached. The guarantors who had come forward after the death of Hallé to save the concerts from dissolution felt that the time had come to place them on a permanent basis. Gustav Behrens, continuing his resuscitating work, initiated a meeting through the Lord Mayor to discuss ways and means, and this was held on 19 July. After a detailed and illuminating statement by Behrens, the Lord Mayor proposed a resolution approving of the transfer of the Hallé Concerts and goodwill to a society to consist of a limited number of members. The necessary business formalities were to be arranged by the guarantors and submitted to a meeting of members.

The Hallé Concerts Society had been born.

Among the first fifty subscribers, headed by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Robert Gibson, were such distinguished names as the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour (subsequently Lord Balfour), Sir William Houldsworth, C. P. Scott (Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*), three members of the Behrens family (Charles, Gustav and Harry), three of the Forsyth family (James, Algernon and James Aikman), Adolph Brodsky, Mrs. Charles E. Lees, of Oldham, and Miss Gaskell (representing the women). The complete list supplied ample refutation of the notion put forward in certain quarters at the time that the Hallé Concerts Society owed its formation to the German colony in Manchester. And now a great event impended. Richter, whose Vienna engagements had hitherto made it impossible for him to accept Manchester's invitation to come to the Hallé, wrote to say that he was in a position to take up the offer originally made to him. A meeting of the new guarantors of the Hallé Society was convened; the Liverpool Philharmonic Society was asked, as before, whether it would co-operate; and Cowen, as the then conductor of the Hallé

Orchestra, was acquainted with the news about Richter. A Manchester deputation went to Liverpool on 21 September and the situation was thoroughly explored and discussed. But trouble was brewing. Cowen was hoisting the storm cone. Liverpool would have nothing to do with the plan to bring Richter to the North. Nevertheless the principal Manchester advocates on behalf of Richter went ahead to recommend his appointment to a full meeting of shareholders of the Society, with the exception of Forsyth, who was worried about the financial risks attached to the project.

Meanwhile, Cowen had written to all the guarantors and had also been busy elsewhere. His case was that he had come to the rescue of the concerts at a critical moment in their history and on condition that at the end of his three years his position would be reconsidered. This view was not accepted by Behrens, and Cowen's statement that the concerts had been increasingly successful, artistically and financially, was not upheld by a *Manchester Guardian* editorial, which examined the facts and figures. Cowen also made a reference to his nationality—one whose chief misfortune lies in the fact of his being an Englishman. The acrimonious controversy that ensued—so long ago—need occupy little space in a centenary tribute. A letter from Cowen to Richter was obviously motivated by the desire to dissuade the latter from taking up the Manchester appointment. After talks with Behrens, Richter was convinced that no breach of agreement with Cowen was involved. The latter was demanding an increase in his salary of £1,050; greater prominence in the publicity of the Hallé; a guarantee of his position for the 1899-1900 season. The guarantors, not unnaturally, resented what they regarded as a *diktat*. Neither the orchestra nor the concerts could be regarded as anyone's private property. They were not prepared to extend the agreement made with Cowen. But Cowen was not made of the stuff that readily surrenders. In his armoury were many weapons, orthodox and otherwise, though their use in such a campaign as this could hardly help the cause of music. By its very nature the unpleasant business deserved as early an end as could be managed. On 18 October Cowen was

informed by a minute of the Executive Committee that he would not be re-engaged after the 1898-9 season had ended. But the controversy did not prevent the conductor receiving a tremendous reception at the opening of that season. The spirit of justice must have been actively present in the Free Trade Hall, for on the following night another crowded audience gave Richter and his visiting orchestra an equally vociferous welcome.

Sir Frederic Cowen, who had a big reputation as a composer, especially of choral works—his six symphonies did not catch the public ear, except perhaps the Third, the 'Scandinavian' Symphony, dedicated to Richter himself—was regarded in his day as a conductor of high merit. Unlike Hallé he conducted from memory, a tenacious and extensive one. Contemporary critics did not rank him with Richter and August Manns. It might be interesting to speculate how the critics of today would have classified him. Perhaps they would say that he was a highly efficient craftsman, with great knowledge and experience. The appointment of Richter did not mean that Cowen disappeared from the northern scene. He continued to conduct in Liverpool and Bradford, engagements which normally belonged to the Hallé chief. But the Hallé was not excluded from Liverpool for concerts independently arranged; and in Bradford a reduced Hallé Orchestra was given permission to perform under Cowen's baton for the two choral concerts of the Bradford Subscription Concerts.

Before Richter took up the baton in Manchester he met the Executive Committee of the Hallé Society in London in October 1898; he was due to return to the Continent from his English concerts in the following month. It was essential that conductor and committee should agree on the basic plans for future operations, on the following lines: the full orchestra for orchestral concerts; a smaller band for the Gentlemen's Concerts; similarly reduced orchestral forces for choral concerts; employment of deputies to be prohibited. (It is well known how Henry Wood and Robert Newman ended this deleterious and frustrating practice in London.) Personnel of the orchestra came under review. There had been changes in the leadership. At the close of the 1894-5

season Willy Hess left, and for a season Adolf Brodsky took his place. He had onerous duties as Principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music, leader of a famous quartet, and a distinguished soloist. He was replaced by Risegari, and Richter's friend Ernest Schiever was appointed to the leadership of the Liverpool concerts. Other innovations were the restriction of soloists where possible to one per concert and the reduction of the length of concerts to two hours, including the interval.

The list of guarantors was increased from fifty to a hundred and four, and there was in reserve a guarantee fund of over £15,000.

Richter had an international reputation. He was generally acknowledged to be a 'great' conductor by any standards, supreme in Wagner, Beethoven and Brahms. His early programmes in Manchester did not travel outside the familiar paths. The orchestra was 'running in' under the new driver. Safety was the circumspect but understandable watchword. This, of course, refers to the content of the programmes, not to their interpretative treatment. First under Sir Charles Hallé and then, for a brief period, under Cowen, the orchestra had had the advantage of a skilled, intensive, unremitting training, and, most importantly, of working constantly as a closely integrated unit, not, as so often happened in London, as a fluctuating concourse of instrumental atoms. At his first concert to open the 1899 season Richter played the *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* overtures, Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Haydn, and—not difficult to guess—Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The critics were unanimous about the revelatory character of the performances, and their overwhelming effect on the audience. It was indeed an auspicious beginning. But musical enterprises are seldom allowed to flourish without some controversy. In time Richter became the target for public criticism because of his 'conservative' attitude to the introduction of new works, specially by British composers; and the Hallé programmes also produced complaints about the regular reiteration of such well-known choral masterpieces as *Messiah* and *Elijah*. It is as true today as it was then that these works, *Messiah* notably, fill the hall.

Promoters of such concerts have no cause to worry about the box-office. In Manchester *Messiah* and *Elijah* were profit-makers. Any criticism of so-called 'commercial preoccupations', to be fair, had to acknowledge, also, that the majority of the public *wanted* to hear their Handel and Mendelssohn favourites; and, further, that these financially successful concerts offset the losses, realistically to be expected on concerts whose programme content was not so popular. T'was ever thus!

Of course, works new to Manchester were introduced by Richter. In the 1905-6 season they included Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto, César Franck's Symphonic Variations (with Rauol Pugno as soloist), Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, César Franck's Symphony, Saint-Saëns' *Havanaise* for violin and orchestra, Elgar's Introduction and Allegro for strings, Bach's Wedding Cantata, scenes from Weber's *Euryanthe*, Richard Strauss's 'Domestic' Symphony (repeated by request a few weeks later), Liszt's *Dante* Symphony, Glazunov's Violin Concerto (with Mischa Elman, then a child prodigy, as soloist). There was a small loss on the forty-three concerts of the season, twenty-two of which were given in Manchester. There was considerable dissatisfaction with what was held to be the cold-shouldering of contemporary works, except for Elgar and York Bowen (who played his Piano Concerto) representing England, Berlioz and Franck representing France. Richter was regarded as too narrow and rigid in his sympathies. Our own Holbrooke, and France's Debussy were among those who it was claimed deserved a hearing in Manchester. A musical diet mostly confined to the great romantics—whom Richter loved, and played with deep and arresting conviction—was bound to create heaviness if not indigestion. True, Richter let his followers hear Richard Strauss's *Sinfonia Domestica*, *Ein Heldenleben*, *Tod und Verklärung*. Bruckner's music made little headway; nobody would suggest it was 'box-office' in this country even today. His Fourth Symphony excited no more enthusiasm than the previously played Third.

The advent of the Jubilee Season of the Hallé Concerts (1907-8) provided an appropriate opportunity for further discussion on the

character of the programmes, and the best way of celebrating an important anniversary. 'Sammy' Langford, who had succeeded Ernest Newman as music critic of the *Manchester Guardian*—and it would be difficult to over-estimate the contribution made by these two remarkable men to the entertainment and enlightenment of the musical public—twitted in a lively article those who clamoured for the new and unfamiliar. Satirically, he wrote that, according to their ideas, the Jubilee should be marked by performances of 'Strauss's seven symphonic tone-poems, Bruckner's eternal nine Symphonies, the symphonies of Mahler and Weingartner, a rigorous course of Reger, an extensive selection from the works of the young French school, perhaps a concert performance of *Salome* or *Penthesilia*, and also something towards paying off the debt of recognition that we owe to Berlioz and Liszt'. 'S.L.' must have enjoyed writing that article. What actually happened was that the Hallé Committee built the celebratory season on the solid foundation of the nine symphonies of Beethoven. That decision was worthily motivated by a desire to offer tribute to the memory and work of Charles Hallé to whom Beethoven had always been a god, and who had successfully striven to present the symphonies with loving care and irrefragable belief to his public. The Third and Fourth Piano Concertos, the Violin Concerto, and the 'Leonora No. 3' Overture were also included. Richard Strauss was represented by three of his tone-poems; Wagner had an evening to himself; Tchaikovsky's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies were played; Granville Bantock's *Omar Khayyám* was included as a British novelty; and in the last concert Bruckner's *Te Deum* shared the honours with Beethoven's Choral Symphony. The season also paid memorial homage to Grieg with a performance of his 'An old Norwegian Romance with Variations', and to Joachim, with his Hungarian Concerto, in which the soloist was Willy Hess.

In the Jubilee Season Richter was invited to conduct *The Ring*—for the first time in English—at Covent Garden, and Franz Beidler came to Manchester to conduct during Richter's absence in London. A similar arrangement was made in the following

season, a season which contributed to musical history with the first world performance under Richter of Elgar's First Symphony (dedicated to the conductor, as 'true artist and true friend'). An audience representing the musical *élite* of the country assembled in Manchester on 3 December 1908, notwithstanding the fact that the symphony was to be presented in London the week after. The advocates of more modern programmes were not put out of stride by this event, and the press campaign was intensified by an article in the *Daily Dispatch*—a matter of more than passing interest to the present writer who, years later, worked in the London office of that newspaper for nearly twenty years. Topical point to the criticism was supplied by the first appearance in Manchester, immediately following the production of the Elgar Symphony, of the New Symphony Orchestra, from London, in a programme of modern music, conducted by Thomas Beecham. The records of the time show that the audience on this occasion was no larger than the numbers of the orchestra on the platform!

Criticism of Richter's deputy, Beidler, was growing, especially as it was thought in some quarters that he was being 'groomed' for the regular conductorship of the Hallé. The Hallé authorities were constrained to point out that Hans Richter had not resigned, although age necessitated the reduction of his activities. He accordingly limited his work by ceasing his engagements with Covent Garden and contracting to conduct the Hallé Orchestra's concerts for three more years. Those discontented with the Richter programmes continued their campaign, not without evoking a defence from others who favoured the established 'classics', and from the financial point of view there was no doubt that the 'favourite' works adequately justified themselves. Those of us who have been attending concerts for the last thirty years or more do not need to be enlightened about the monetary risks generally involved in the production of contemporary music, allowing for fluctuations in public taste, even in relation to the acknowledged masterpieces. Without exploring all the details, it may be mentioned that the 1909-10 programmes included Granville Bantock's delightful and light-hearted overture,

Pierrot of the Minute; Strauss's *Don Quixote*; another performance of Elgar's First Symphony; Ernest Schelling's *Fantastic Suite* (with the composer as soloist); Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6.

But the protagonists of the new music were not forgetting their self-imposed mission, and under the stimulus of the *Daily Dispatch* critic, Jack Kahane, formed the Manchester Musical Society to give practical expression to their desire to introduce the music they considered to be unjustly neglected. It was a brave, determined, variegated, but unsuccessful effort; public support did not match the publicity the enterprise received in the press. The dialectical battle became bitterly fierce. A manifesto by Kahane attacked the Hallé policy both on artistic and financial grounds. There were times when the controversies seemed to operate on the principle of 'no holds barred'. Richter, of course, took no part in these battles. He was not an easily perturbed individual. He had a broad back and a stolid stance. What he privately thought is another matter. By this time his health had suffered, and on 13 February 1911 it was announced that he would retire from all active work at the end of the season. In March he conducted the Hallé Choir and Orchestra in Bach's B minor Mass, and a week later came the last orchestral concert of the season, marked by a great rendering of Brahms's First Symphony, which a packed audience received with grateful, tumultuous applause. His final appearance was made at the Pension Fund Concert and was marked by a similarly heartfelt and valedictory scene. There was musical, spiritual and personal appositeness in the fact that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was the crown and climax of the evening—and of an epoch in the story of the Hallé: it was the symphony he had conducted at his first concert there.

His interpretations of the works most closely associated with his name and career had a monumental strength, and were distinguished also by a penetrating understanding and a sustained clarity. There is every justification for accepting the view of his admirers—and even of his critics—that he sought to present

Beethoven, not Richter. He was not built, even physically, for pose. He had a massive and unshakeable honesty. His beat was clear and authoritative, his eye commanding (and corrective), his left hand the unfailing expositor of nuance of expression. Orchestral players—no purveyors of easy bouquets—had a profound respect for his knowledge and mastery. His choruses were never in doubt about what he wanted, or why. One of the highest commendations of a conductor by professionals who work with him is contained in the curt and simple phrase: 'He knows his job.' It was often used of Hans Richter, in the opera house as well as in the concert hall. True, his natural sympathies had their human limitations. The French School—Berlioz and Franck excepted—did not excite his interpretative interest; and enough has been recalled to indicate what was thought—at any rate by an active and articulate minority—about his attitude to contemporary composers. No artist can fairly be expected to be at home in all styles. What lay near to Richter's heart and mind he did superlatively and so Manchester was enabled to enjoy and to cherish magnificent and revelatory performances of great musical masterpieces.

Even a comparatively brief account of his career in Manchester and the North must include mention of his services to the music of Elgar. The creative genius of the one and the interpretative genius of the other came quickly to fruitful co-operation. Richter unmistakably paved the way for the ultimate recognition of the English composer's enduring qualities, and to the subsequent performances, under many different but devoted batons, which have enriched, and continue to enrich, our listening, and to perpetuate the works of one of the most illustrious names in English music. It was Richter who had conducted all the performances of the opening Bayreuth Festival in 1876, and when Wagner decided to put on a festival of his works in London in 1877 he called on Richter to help him. The conductorship was shared by the two men, but it was Richter who was the main-spring of the mammoth occasion at which the orchestra numbered as many as 170. Richter revealed the true greatness of Wagner in

his interpretations of excerpts from *The Ring*, and also his own. The orchestral playing was unanimously voted superb. The players had the greatest admiration for him, as they always have for a conductor who immediately convinces them that he knows his job. A famous horn player himself, there was nothing surprising in the episode of the horn player in the orchestra, who, complaining that his part was unplayable, was asked to pass his instrument over to Richter, who showed him how the 'impossible' passage should be rendered. Not that he was—or pretended to be—infallible. Once in a Brahms overture, which he was directing from memory, he made a mistake. Stopping the orchestra, he turned to the audience and told them that the error was his own. The overture was played again. The Richter Concerts at St. James's Hall became landmarks in London musical life. He had his critics, of course; Sullivan was one. Nationalist feelings were stirring in certain quarters against the 'interloper'. But Richter remained imperturbable. After all, he worked in this country for over thirty years in all, and in the two leading centres of music, Manchester and London, established himself as one of the great musical interpreters of the age. Henry Wood, however, has confessed in his autobiography, *My Life of Music*, that, as a young man attending Richter's London concerts, he found that the performances left him 'cold and unmoved'.

'Yet, strangely enough, when I heard him in Vienna, Berlin, Munich and Bayreuth he thrilled me with his masterly grip. I have a suspicion that many foreign conductors in those days entertained the mistaken notion that we in England did not understand music. Handel told Gluck as much one day when they met in Piccadilly; Carl Muck once expressed the same sentiment to me when I ventured to criticise a performance of the *Dutchman* under his direction at Covent Garden. . . . Perhaps Richter held this same view about English people not understanding music? And yet I recall a certain Monday evening at St. James's Hall when he gave a most inspired performance of the Prelude and Liebestod in the presence of

Cosima Wagner who was sitting in the front row of the stalls surrounded by all the German musical crowd of London. . . .’

It was—and is—often forgotten that Richter’s origin was Hungarian—he was born in Győr. His mother sang at the first performance of *Tannhäuser* in Vienna in 1857. Hans was sent to Löwenburg Seminary in Vienna, and to the choir of the Court Chapel. At the Conservatory he studied horn and violin. He went to Wagner at Lucerne for a year and when he was twenty-five became a conductor in Munich. In 1870 he took part in the first performance of the *Siegfried Idyll* at Tribschen, on Lake Lucerne—Wagner’s moving Christmas morning gift to his wife to commemorate the birth of their son. The following year he became chief conductor of the National Theatre at Pest, and later conductor of the Court Opera in Vienna, also conducting the Philharmonic Concerts there.

Interregnum with Balling

As soon as it was known that the conductorship of the Hallé was vacant partisans began briskly to put forward their views; national and international considerations and suggestions jostled in noisy collisions of musical and extra-musical dialectics. Before any decision was made by the Hallé Committee the obvious course of a season of guest conductors was arranged. Henry Wood, Elgar, Bantock, Beecham, Ronald, Percy Pitt, Michael Balling, Oskar Fried, Franz Schalk and others were heard in this season, a season which gave the Manchester public an opportunity to hear some important British music for the first time. Before the end of the season the appointment of Michael Balling for three years was announced. A son-in-law of Wagner, born in Heidingsfeld-am-Main in 1866, he began as a viola player, and as such joined the Festival Theatre at Bayreuth. He was one of the principal conductors in the Festivals of 1906-14. His importance as a conductor in Germany was attested by his appointment to succeed Mottl at Carlsruhe. He conducted the first performance in Barcelona of *Die Meistersinger* and, in 1910, performances of *The Ring* in English at Edinburgh. In that year he also conducted performances of Gluck's *Orpheus* at the Savoy Theatre.

He was a strong personality in every way, and at his first concert had given the impression of a masterful musician. He believed in extending the range of the appeal of music; he had the highest standards; did not believe that great art should be judged by its success or failure at the box-office; and he expressed his views in uncompromising terms. He criticized the Manchester Corporation for its lack of support for the Hallé Concerts, pleaded strongly for municipal financial support, for the engagement of

the orchestra for a period of six months at a time, at a weekly salary, and produced a scheme by which, eventually, after a meeting of guarantors, a sum of nearly £2,000 was forthcoming from them—a change from the usual procedure of being asked for their contribution after a deficit had been made. Balling also proposed the establishment of an opera house and an English school of opera. All the customary arguments with which we are all so familiar were heard: on both sides.

Art galleries, libraries, parks are subsidized. Why not music? Is the ear to be starved in favour of the eye? And on the other side there were the usual objections to spending public money on enterprises that appealed only to comparatively few. In 1913 the Manchester Corporation engaged the Hallé Orchestra for two concerts in the Town Hall at only nominal admission prices, with Balling conducting without fee. All seats were sold. But the venture was ill-starred. The physical and musical conditions of the Town Hall were inadequate, and criticism and opposition killed the well-intentioned plan. But Balling was not without success in another field. As he had hitherto suggested, the orchestra was put on contract for six months in the year, leaving the players free for other engagements in the remaining six months. But finance kept rearing its ugly head! Despite increased engagements for the orchestra, a deficit had to be faced; subscriptions fell away. Guarantors paid again and the Society came in for more of the customary criticism. The Balling programmes were enterprising enough, with new works from British and foreign composers. He also took the Hallé to Scotland and to London in the year before the First World War. But the depressing fact of empty seats could not be ignored, and this and that expedient to fill the gaps did not work. Then the Hallé Society lost the able and diplomatic services of its chairman, E. J. Broadfield, who died at the age of eighty-two. In the background he had worked valiantly for the Society and for music. Gustav Behrens, the treasurer, became chairman. Another change was the departure from the leadership of the orchestra of C. Rawdon Briggs. He was replaced by a musician who had won the highest praise from

Henry Wood and others—Arthur Catterall—whose work in Manchester and London still shines brightly in the memory of concert enthusiasts.

During the Balling régime, the Hallé Orchestra had to meet competition from the Brand Lane Concerts, initiated by Brand Lane, and conducted by Henry Wood, who had also conducted the Gentlemen's Concerts for a period. Wood brought players from the Queen's Hall Orchestra to the Brand Lane organization, but both the Hallé and its rival were able to function in their different ways. It is also of interest that the small Hallé Orchestra which played for the Manchester Promenade Concerts gave Saturday night concerts, conducted by Balling, Bantock and Harty. Only London excelled Manchester in the provision of regular weekly symphony concerts of high excellence.

Now clouds were gathering on much wider horizons than those of Manchester. Meanwhile, however, in May 1914, the Hallé Society summoned its members to a 'crisis' meeting which had to face, among other things, a deficit of £1,600. Artistic excellence is no guarantee of profits, nor is loyal co-operation. What if the Hallé Concerts had to go? But the possibility of such a calamity was overshadowed by the news that shook the world on 4 August.

Balling was away in Germany, and had intimated that he did not think he could return to Manchester later that year. Gustav Behrens, the chairman, had communicated the Society's intention to continue the concerts because of the great tradition involved and in order not to put able and loyal musicians out of employment. The orchestral players accepted half salary for twenty weeks. To a meeting of guarantors the Society's chairman explained the situation and pointed out that the concerts had continued without a break for fifty-seven years. He expressed the hope that, with the orchestra's acceptance of reduced fees for the next season, and other economies, the winter concerts could go on. The sense that music was not less but more essential in times of grave crisis was very much in the minds of those responsible for the Hallé. You cannot discontinue an orchestra,

however good it is, and however powerful the reason, and expect to re-create it, as if by magic, when the trouble is over. Orchestras are organic entities, sensitive and susceptible to mortality, as we know too painfully. The concerts continued with guest conductors—Elgar, Beecham, Ronald, R. H. Wilson.

Thomas Beecham now began to play an increasingly important part in this period. Brilliant, voluble, volatile, with rapier tongue as well as baton, he was strongly nourishing his opera enthusiasm and ambition to make Manchester and the North a strong and active area for music-making, operatic as well as symphonic. The Hallé's season for 1915-16 was on an ambitious scale, with the chorus taking part in a wider variety—and a different character—of works, both with and without the orchestra. Nor did the fact that there was a war on deter Beecham from introducing novelties into his programmes. Safonoff came to share the rostrum with Beecham, and the Hallé's playing earned new encomiums. Early in 1916 Landon Ronald, Granville Bantock and Hamilton Harty were guest conductors during Beecham's absence conducting on the Continent. Enterprising programmes, and Beecham's free services notwithstanding, the season lost money. It should also be remembered that the orchestra was on reduced salaries.

These factors—and no doubt others—stimulated Beecham's brilliant brain to the contemplation and organization of new plans, and his ever-ready tongue to the expression of characteristically satirical views on the stupidities of musical education and music-making in general in this country, whereby youngsters are trained to sing and play and then given few—or no—opportunities to exercise their talents.

In 1917 at the annual meeting of the Hallé Society proposals were put forward by which there would be a short season of nightly Promenade Concerts preceding the opening of the Hallé season proper, and also a seven weeks' season of opera. Beecham would be responsible for both (financially also) and the Hallé players would be, therefore, assured of considerably more employment. The Hallé Committee had also arranged with Brand Lane to use the Hallé Orchestra instead of his own players.

These changes meant the cessation of the Saturday Promenade Concerts of the Manchester Orchestra Limited, and a reduction in the number of the Hallé Concerts. For these the conductors were all English, in addition to Beecham: Elgar, Ronald, Eugene Goossens, Harty, Julius Harrison, R. H. Wilson. So the 1917-18 season was reached, with, mainly, familiar music in the programme of the fifteen concerts. Press and other comments were now looking back over the war years, although the conflict was not yet over, and evaluating Manchester's and the Hallé's achievement during this grim period. There had always been in certain quarters, especially outside Manchester, cynical reactions to the notion that Manchester was the real musical centre of England. Without fanning old controversies the fact remains that the First World War, instead of killing the Hallé as many had thought to be inevitable, had somehow revitalized it. Public appetite for good music expanded and taste became more discriminating. True, there were financial losses and the guarantors had to dip into their pockets. But music survived and the Hallé flag was never lowered.

Enter Hamilton Harty

For the season of 1918-19, in addition to the Hallé Concerts, there were a four weeks' series of Promenade Concerts, and an eight weeks' season of opera after Christmas, and also another short opera period in the spring. But though even wars have an end, other troubles do not necessarily cease also. Private matters made it necessary for Beecham to end his generous aid, financial and musical; the Manchester Orchestra Proms came to an end in the arrangement whereby the Hallé Orchestra was employed by Brand Lane; some of the Hallé players claimed compensation (unsuccessfully) for the abandonment of the Proms; and eventually this state of uncertainty, compounded also of grievance, resulted in the opening of the 1920 season with familiar faces missing from the orchestra. Two members had been killed in action of the twenty-seven who served, not all of whom returned to their former places. Beecham conducted only one concert; Albert Coates came from Russia with a shining reputation, to intrigue and dazzle Manchester audiences, especially with his authoritative interpretation of such works as Scriabin's *Poème de l'extase*; and Hamilton Harty and Landon Ronald were also engaged.

After the Christmas holidays came a highly important announcement for the future of the Hallé. Beecham was now unable to continue his work in Manchester. Hamilton Harty was appointed to the conductorship, and thus the year 1920 became another notable landmark in the history of an orchestra whose vitality has ever triumphed over vicissitude. Hamilton Harty could not help being a musician, and won fame in three capacities: as pianist-accompanist, composer and conductor. He had established an impressive reputation in all three spheres before he came to

Manchester to guide the destinies of the Hallé for an exciting period. He was born in Hillsborough, Northern Ireland, in 1879, into a musical atmosphere and environment. His father taught him the piano and viola, and when the boy was only twelve he was made organist at a church in County Antrim. After other organ appointments he went to London at the age of twenty-one. Then began one of his careers—that of accompanist. At the same time he was composing and winning prizes for chamber works. In the 1907 season of Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall his *Comedy Overture* and his setting of the *Ode to a Nightingale* (for soprano solo and orchestra) were produced with marked success and it became evident that an orchestral composer of unusual gifts had arrived, in addition to an accompanist of rare sensibility. In the next few years the tone-poem *With the Wild Geese*, a Violin Concerto, and the choral-orchestral *The Mystic Trumpeter* added greatly to his repute. Nor must his delightful songs, including arrangements of Irish folk-tunes, be forgotten. Later in his career, despite his preoccupations with extensive conducting engagements, came his orchestrations of Handel's *Water Music* and *The Music for the Royal Fireworks* which have won an assured place in the concert repertoire. And it was Manchester that had the first opportunity to hear his 'Irish' Symphony, in 1924, in a rewritten version of the earlier score. It is clear, therefore, that when this versatile and fascinating Irishman became conductor of the Hallé there was no need to 'introduce' him; and he had already, as has been mentioned, appeared as a guest conductor.

His impact was immediate. Harty had 'temperament'—he was Irish! Both on and off the rostrum he had infectious charm as well as a preference, not unknown among conductors, for having his own way, not only with regard to the musical side of his work but also to the business management arrangements. If the orchestra quickly recognized—as orchestras do—that in their new permanent conductor they had a musician of superb quality and a man of stimulating personality, Hamilton Harty also realized that he had under his baton a fine body of players: quickly

responsive, keen, technically well-trained and enthusiastic. Harty's methods seemed to suit an orchestra of the Hallé's disposition, for, obviously, psychology has as much to do with the relationship between conductor and orchestra as musicality. Some orchestras—not usually British—can be dragooned. But you were not long at a Harty rehearsal before you realized that persuasion, not dictatorship, was his line. They were all co-operators in a musical enterprise. He would smile his disarming smile at 'the boys', use Christian names, and generally create an atmosphere of geniality, which was greatly helped by his sense of humour. He eschewed the biting wit of a Beecham.

This is not to say that Harty was not a controversial personality, or that he was not frequently involved in disputation. Early in his reign at Manchester he had to contend with difficult problems. One of them centred on the question of municipal subsidy, to which there had been strong opposition within and outside the Council. Yet, the Hallé situation was such that more money was needed for the orchestra's activities—or dire consequences might have to be faced: dire at least to musicians and the music-loving public. Various suggestions were thrown around; comparisons made with Birmingham which had established a municipal orchestra; and the advocates of subsidy were not slow to point out that reluctance to support symphonic music incongruously co-existed with willingness to put bands in the public parks. Strong arguments were produced for granting municipal aid, not the least of which was the plain fact that it had become necessary.

And so, towards the end of 1920, the British Music Society sent a deputation to the Town Hall Committee to discuss the prospects of establishing a municipal orchestra, and also for employing the Hallé Orchestra in halls controlled by the municipality and with the support of the Manchester Corporation.

In the end, Manchester Municipal Concerts became an established fact and were given fortnightly at low admission prices, with Harty conducting the Hallé at all the concerts. School children from selected schools were charged only sixpence for each concert, and the records show that they were the most

enthusiastic patrons of all. So much so, in fact, that a special concert for children was organized in December 1924, and no charge was made for seats. Those who have had any experience of children's concerts anywhere will know that however much boredom may inflict adult audiences it has no place in an audience of children.

Having been successfully launched—not, of course, without financial loss—the Municipal Concerts were extended, with Harty's blessing expressed in terms that described them as a most important event in the history of music in Manchester. There were some criticisms of the content of the programmes, which, on the choral evenings, had given the public Haydn's *Creation* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. The concerts flourished up to the season of 1930-1, when the general economic slump led to a dismaying decline in public support. The number of concerts was reduced, and in the later seasons, after Harty had left, the conductorship passed first to R. J. Forbes and then to William Rees, who took charge in 1938. And then, just when there were possibilities of at least some expansion, the Second World War put an end to the laudable Manchester enterprise of the Municipal Concerts.

Harty, with the normal Hallé Concerts, was quickly infusing in the players a new zest and was himself, in the process, growing in stature. The number of concerts in the season was restored to twenty and, apart from the conductor's inspiring leadership on the rostrum, the Hallé Concerts became notable also for Harty's appearance at the piano in the role of accompanist. These were memorable in every way, and it is not going too far to say that those who never heard him in this role or as a chamber-music performer have been denied the opportunity of appreciating the most consistently brilliant aspect of his great gifts. At one concert he played the solo part in his Piano Concerto—its first Manchester performance—with Beecham on the rostrum.

Another outstanding feature of Harty's régime was his performances of the music of Berlioz. Berlioz was his god. He was never tired of conducting him, or of talking, with consuming

zeal, about him. Manchester, of course, had not been denied its share of Berlioz, if one remembers Sir Charles Hallé's eloquent advocacy of the French composer. On more than one train journey Sir Adrian Boult has enthused to me about the Hallé Orchestra's performances, under Harty, of the 'Fantastic' Symphony. 'Whenever I had a chance,' he said, 'I would always rush off to Manchester to hear it'; and these conversations, it may be added, occurred years after Harty had left Manchester, and indeed after he died. How alive the memory of those interpretations must have stayed in the mind—and in the mind of another eminent conductor at that.

In 1926 Adrian Boult had written to the *Manchester Guardian* suggesting that Manchester should send Harty and the Hallé to Paris to give a performance of the 'Fantastic'. Boult added that he had heard many of the great European Orchestras, and the most famous American, and that the Hallé was undoubtedly fit to stand in the same category. Harty was, naturally, moved by so warm and spontaneous a compliment, and declared his readiness to go to Paris whenever the opportunity arose. Finance was the crucial consideration, as it was impossible for the Hallé Society to use its funds for concerts outside Manchester, efforts were begun to raise a fund from among enthusiasts in Manchester and London. An itinerary was worked out which included other French centres in addition to Paris. But another imaginative project, unfortunately, was not to be realized and France lost an opportunity to hear an English orchestra (under an Irish conductor) in an interpretation of a French masterpiece which, whether acceptable to French audiences or not, would certainly have lacked nothing in excitement and devotion to the genius of Hector Berlioz.

Although Paris and other French cities were denied the exhilarating experience of hearing the Hallé, London was luckier. I well remember the Queen's Hall on 13 January 1928, when Sir Hamilton Harty—he had been knighted in 1925 for his services to music—brought the Hallé Orchestra to the Metropolis. There was an atmosphere of considerable excitement and

expectation. Visits of foreign orchestras had always precipitated discussions about the comparatively poor standard of orchestral playing in London. Those of us who lived in London were always hearing about the prowess of the Manchester Orchestra; and there was, I think, a certain amount of natural jealousy on the part of Londoners (perhaps one should say 'Southerners') concerning the 'competition' from the North. I happened to be in a somewhat enviable position in this matter. Domiciled in London, I had opportunities to hear the London orchestras week after week; professionally I was a member of the London editorial staff of the Manchester *Daily Dispatch*, so that I could not help feeling a more than casual interest in the affairs of the Hallé. This particular concert evoked tremendous enthusiasm from the audience and a series of press notices which, for exuberant praise, I have seldom seen equalled. The unanimous view was that London had not an orchestra to equal this; moreover, comparison was made with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (fairly regular visitors)—and in favour of the Hallé; there was no need any more, it was said, to go abroad to hear superb orchestral performances. The B.B.C. came in for warm commendation for having invited the Manchester players and their conductor to London. In this period, whenever the Hallé came to London, there were full houses and superlatives of praise. They were *musical* occasions, pure and simple, not, as when some of the foreign orchestras came, especially the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, musical occasions with large tinctures of *snobisme*. The ferment of pleasure (and concomitant dissatisfaction) created by the visit of the Hallé had ultimately important repercussions on the London musical scene, but these lie outside the immediate scope of these comments.

But if all was acclamation in London it was not so all the time in Manchester. Harty was criticized on the ground of conservatism in programme-building, and because preliminary announcements of works to be played were often unfulfilled. Indeed, it was not to be expected that a personality of the complexity of the strong-willed Irishman would not create differences and attract the

lightning which seldom ceases to flicker and flash in the musical world. Harty was not the man to apologize for views that might not find general favour. He based himself always on good music; music about the enduring merits of which there was no dispute. To produce a novelty just because it was a novelty had, for him, no virtue at all. That he was not always the embodiment of tact in the exposition of his artistic faith did not help matters. There were modern works for which he had no sympathy at all, and he made no attempt to disguise the fact. Accusations of inconsistency by his critics served chiefly to confirm him in his original propositions.

Another controversy centred on the employment of women in the orchestra. This question had long been productive of argumentative steam. Today nobody faints at the sight of a woman tympanist, a woman double-bass player, a woman trumpeter, and, of course, a woman oboist is taken for granted even in the principal position. Harpists were somehow, whether for musical or celestial reasons, 'above the battle'. . . . Harty, however, was determined to dispense with the woman players, despite their first-class work in the difficult days of the First World War. The storm burst quickly, and he and Ethel Smyth were soon heavily involved in the tempest. Without any detailed retrospective exploration of an old dispute—which strikes a note of academic irrelevancy today—the upshot was that the women members went. The feeling of the majority of people was against the conductor, but he was not to be deflected from what he was convinced, mistakenly or otherwise, to be best for the orchestra and for music.

Other difficulties marked the Harty era. The B.B.C. decided to form its Symphony Orchestra in 1930, under Sir Adrian Boult, who came from the Birmingham Orchestra to this new and highly important sphere of activity. The Hallé Society increased the fees for leading players in order not to lose them to London. Some of the instrumentalists did go to London, a fact which greatly piqued Harty and worried the Hallé Society, which was also discontented with the broadcasting fees paid by the B.B.C.

(The Hallé's first concert of the 1924-5 season was its first to be broadcast.) The Society asked for bigger broadcasting fees, and there was much to-ing and fro-ing. But the negotiations with the B.B.C. came to naught. Changes made by the Broadcasting Corporation in the North, which included the replacement of the Northern Wireless Orchestra (as it was then called), much disturbed the Hallé authorities. One of the criticisms directed against the B.B.C. at this time was that it was 'starving the North' for the sake of its own newly established orchestra in London. There was much argument about it in the local and national press and elsewhere. One of the bones of contention was the freeing of players from the Northern Studio Orchestra which had taken the place of the Northern Wireless Orchestra, and was, in fact, a nonet, for Hallé dates. No agreement was reached about this and the instrumentalists involved left the Hallé Orchestra. But a year or so later the B.B.C. increased the Northern Studio Orchestra by employing twenty-two of the players from the Hallé for thirty studio concerts in the winter of 1933-4. This was a quite separate arrangement from the broadcasting of ten Hallé Concerts. During 1934 the B.B.C. formed a Northern Orchestra, of thirty-five players who were members of the Hallé, on a permanent basis, and the Hallé Society was enabled to use the players for the regular season of twenty concerts as well as for engagements in other places in the North, including the concerts of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society.

This was a most beneficial move for the Hallé. The Society had naturally been worried about the problem of maintaining the personnel strength and the artistic standards of the orchestra. Players, like conductors or chimney-sweeps, must live, and with inadequate opportunities in Manchester and the North for full employment there was always the danger of migration to London and elsewhere; and, moreover, the possibility of hardship for musicians who, whatever their merits, might find difficulty in joining other orchestras already functioning with a full complement.

Now all this was removed. John F. Russell pertinently pointed out in *Musical Opinion* that

'benefit of permanent employment will be felt by thirty-five players, but the implications of the scheme do not stop there. Most of the players who will thus be absorbed have had lucrative summer engagements at seaside and spa pleasure resorts, jobs which in the future they will have to relinquish. It is not unnatural to suppose that the way will now be open, by logical order of succession, for the other less fortunate members of the Hallé Orchestra to find summer work in these capacities. . . .'

Sir Hamilton had shown himself antipathetic to the formation of the big B.B.C. Orchestra in London, and after his retirement from the Hallé relations between the orchestra and the B.B.C. improved. It must be remembered, however, that in May-June 1930 the B.B.C. financed a four weeks' season of Promenade Concerts in the North—two weeks in Manchester, one in Liverpool and one in Leeds—at which the Hallé under Harty played at well-attended and successful concerts. Despite the appeal of outdoor attractions 3,500 people attended during the four weeks.

Another development for the 1932-3 season took the form of a new guarantee scheme appealing to those able (and willing) to contribute smaller amounts to the Hallé Society. It was argued that losses should not fall entirely on members of the Society, and that those who loved music among the general public should also contribute their share. Under the scheme a member of the public could become a guarantor for a minimum sum of £10. There was a quick and excellent response. In all, a sum of nearly £5,000 was subscribed.

Meanwhile, Harty had been to America for a series of conducting engagements, and the invitation was inferentially a tribute to the Hallé, whose reputation was known across the Atlantic, just as Harty's knighthood was also a compliment to his orchestra. He was greatly impressed by the American musical scene, not least by the manner in which American orchestras were supported by wealthy patrons. They were in a very different situation from orchestras in England, and certainly from that of the Hallé.

Although artistic honour crowned the 1931-2 season, as it had crowned preceding seasons—with Brahms, Sibelius, Bax, Walton and Elgar giving lustre to the programmes—the financial picture was disheartening. After small profits had been made over ten seasons, there was a deficit of over £1,500. The general economic situation gave no hope of early or marked improvement. Where there was no possibility of 'reform' there had to be retrenchment. Orchestra and conductor agreed to take a ten-per-cent. cut in fees. The orchestra also moved in a positive way by organizing a Light Orchestra to give a series of concerts on 'Promenade' lines, and soliciting engagements from outside organizations which could employ a small number of players. Even here there were difficulties—created by the conductor's manifest dislike of having the orchestra directed by anyone else, and by the wish of societies seeking to engage the Hallé Light Orchestra to see their own local, hard-working conductors at the proposed concerts. Members of the Committee disapproved of the conductor's 'possessiveness' and of his tendency to take the organizational control more and more into his own hands. These and other straws were indications of an unsuspected wind blowing from another quarter. On returning from another visit to America Sir Hamilton Harty produced a shock for the Hallé Society. It was announced that he had been appointed artistic adviser and conductor-in-chief of the London Symphony Orchestra.

This development, he said, would not interfere with his conductorship of the Hallé Orchestra. None the less, he had another American trip in prospect, involving his absence from Manchester during Hallé Concerts in January and February 1933. It can well be imagined what cumulative effect all this news had on the Society. Sir Hamilton's contract was due to expire at the close of the 1932-3 season. The Hallé Society decided not to renew it. In a press statement he said that he felt he could not carry on any longer and that he had not the time necessary to devote to the work. In the course of the Hallé Society's own account it was pointed out that the conductorship of the orchestra

was of necessity a full-time job, and had always been so. It did not allow of such freedom of movement as had been congenial to Sir Hamilton. Later, in tribute to the orchestra and the Society, he said: 'You honoured me greatly by handing your orchestra over to me, and, as I hand it back to you, I think I am not being immodest when I say I hand it back to you, perhaps better than it was when I took it over.' He did not allow his name to appear in the list of guest conductors who came to the Hallé rostrum in the seasons immediately following his retirement. This was Manchester's loss and, as many thought, his too.

Sir Hamilton, in or out of controversy, had a personal fascination which was hard to resist. I had several experiences of this not only in London but at festivals at Torquay and elsewhere. He was a most engaging conversationalist, and I remember a train journey with him and his great friend, J. A. Forsyth, who was then music critic of the London *Star*, when the talk ranged far and wide and one was content, for the most part, happily to listen. But on one occasion I recall there was no talk. As a representative of the Manchester *Daily Dispatch* I had to beard him in the conductor's room at Queen's Hall, to ask his views on a musical matter then agitating some of the newspapers. He greeted me with that disarming smile which orchestras—and audiences—knew so well. I asked my question—and immediately saw that equally familiar glint in his eye. Seated in his chair, he shook his head. I repeated the question in another form. He quietly stood up, came towards me, put his hands on my shoulders, gently turned me round, and equally gently marched me to the door, opened it and deposited me in the corridor with a smiling 'good night'. That 'interview' was the most unproductive of 'copy' I ever had!

My recollections of delight in characteristic performances are still vivid. Apart from Berlioz, there were Brahms interpretations that, for many, showed the composer in a new light. No longer did we think of Brahms as austere or grey or heavy or stodgy. No doubt, people ought never to have thought of him in those terms, but how salutary and enlightening it is to be proved wrong

or stupid, or both! I remember, also, first hearing Constant Lambert's *Rio Grande*, with the composer conducting and Sir Hamilton playing the piano part: an experience long to cherish. Whilst it is not the purpose of this centenary tribute to catalogue first performances, or to discuss programmes in any detail, mention must be made of the Sibelius Symphonies which now have the ardent allegiance of so many music-lovers. Six of the symphonies were played in four seasons; the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies received their first Manchester performances—as did the Violin Concerto with Arthur Catterall as soloist—in the 1929–30 season. It was under Harty that the first performance in England of Mahler's Ninth Symphony was produced—a composer who is more and more taking his place in our concert repertoire, and of whom the present conductor of the Hallé Orchestra is a most eloquent advocate. There was, of course, criticism of Harty's attitude to modern music, as has already been indicated, whether British or foreign. There generally is; partisans, from whichever side they operate, are difficult to please. Harty was for novelties in moderation, and that phrase is a not unfair description of the pattern of the programmes during his tenure of the conductorship. It must be remembered that the Hallé Orchestra has achieved not only a high national status but an international one. The work of Sir Charles Hallé, Balling, Beecham, and now Hamilton Harty, had created a cumulative realization of the artistic merits and achievements of the orchestra. In America—as Sir Hamilton discovered in the course of his visits—and in important continental musical circles, Manchester and the Hallé had come to be almost synonymous terms. Not cotton but music had come to be the criterion of Manchester's contribution to the times, at any rate in those circles where culture rather than commerce was the yardstick of true values.

To obtrude a personal (and unimportant) note: I was chagrined when I was ordered to begin my association with the *Daily Dispatch* in London, and not in Manchester. It was not that I pined for the Manchester climate or that I was a passionate follower of the fortunes of its football teams, but quite simply because I was

to be deprived of opportunities of hearing (and seeing) the Hallé Orchestra. And its all too infrequent visits to London served positively to deepen dissatisfaction with my geographical location, while at the same time, of course, they made me grateful for each exhilarating descent on Queen's Hall. That was just how one was made to feel about the Hallé, and many friends, colleagues and acquaintances, to whom great music, performed with burning sincerity and conviction, was an essential food to mind and spirit, shared the feeling. It is not surprising, therefore, that, then as now, this great orchestra evoked a response which transcended local patriotism and geographical circumstances. And when visits to Manchester were possible, every effort was made to make sure that they coincided with a Free Trade Hall concert.

During Sir Hamilton Harty's régime, there were important changes in the Hallé personnel. One was the resignation, in 1925, of the leader—Arthur Catterall—who had given superlative service to the orchestra, and also in chamber music through the finely sensitive medium of the Catterall Quartet. There was much talk at the time of differences between him and the conductor, but, in any case, that is an old and forgotten story now. Catterall later went to London to join the B.B.C. Orchestra as leader, where his devoted artistry and wide experience proved invaluable, and increased still further his own musical and personal reputation. He was succeeded by Alfred Barker, who also established himself as a powerful and versatile leader and a sensitive solo artist.

Another retirement brought to a close a term of service of sustained value, marked by indefatigable work for the Hallé Chorus. R. H. Wilson gave up the chorus-mastership after thirty-six years. A meticulous trainer with high standards, he was also able to instil real enthusiasm into his singers, and in all the botherations inseparable from such a task he never lost his great personal popularity. His worthy successor was Harold Dawber, who set himself at once to maintain the level of choral excellence that was handed to him by his predecessor.

Still another important change concerned the Hallé Committee. Gustav Behrens retired from the chairmanship in 1924, but,

happily, remained on the Committee. He had rendered service in the chair that it would be impossible to over-estimate. To unabated enthusiasm he allied cool judgment, shrewdness and wide experience. The vast amount of voluntary work that men of his calibre offer to a community is part of the proud story of English public life. He was succeeded as chairman by E. W. Gromme, who had become a member of the Committee as far back as 1913.

Guest Conductors Again

When Harty was in America—the visit he made before he returned home and announced that he was leaving the Hallé—the concerts during the four weeks of his absence were conducted by guests: Sir John Barbirolli, Pierre Monteux, Sir Edward Elgar and Thomas Beecham. Coming events—if at some remove—were casting their shadow. . . . The orchestra had not had an opportunity for some years of playing under any other baton than that of Harty. He had given a most specific and solid meaning to the fact that he was the regular conductor. He did not warm to the idea of a guest conductor. Harty was the Hallé, and the Hallé was Harty. The first of the ‘guest’ concerts (in the 1932–3 season) was in charge of John Barbirolli, who was then thirty-three. Keen expectancy was aroused by his visit. He was already known, of course, in Manchester and elsewhere as a brilliant conductor of opera. What was his approach to the symphonic repertoire? An audience’s appetite is always whetted when it goes to a concert with a note of sympathetic interrogation in the mind. The note of interrogation was soon erased. In the programme were two symphonies, Mozart’s G minor and the César Franck; and Delius’s *In a Summer Garden*. The *Manchester Guardian* critic paid eloquent tribute to Barbirolli’s ‘sensibility as an artist and his skill as a technician’, and wrote of the performance of the Franck work that ‘in power, splendour, and flexibility went beyond any previous interpretation we have heard’. Little could anyone then have imagined how great a part the young visitor was later to play in the life of the Hallé, of Manchester, and of music in England. Other critics eagerly swelled the chorus of praise.

Another guest, considerably older in years and experience, was

the distinguished French maestro, Pierre Monteux, who was then the conductor of the famed Boston Symphony Orchestra. Monteux is still active today, at the age of eighty-two, and still wears his crinkly hair black and his 'Old Bill' moustache white. He has often indignantly repudiated the belief that he dyes his hair. On one occasion, a few years ago, in the conductor's room at the B.B.C. Maida Vale studios, he mentioned that fact to me and insisted that I rub my hand over his hair to see if any dye came off! I need not add that none did. He is a delightful personality on and off the rostrum. On the rostrum he suggests, in style and general demeanour, a Gallicized Henry Wood. He is devoted to England and has always enjoyed his visits here. But one thing always irritates him about us: our 'silly' quarantine regulations which make it impossible for Madame Monteux to bring her poodle here, and thus prevent her from accompanying her husband. As a conductor he is completely devoid of pose. He is much liked by orchestral players because of his vast knowledge and experience and his quiet but efficient and time-saving methods at rehearsal. It is a velvet glove that he wears and the fist is of flesh and bone.

Years ago, at a rehearsal in Queen's Hall, London, during a section when the lowest strings had nothing to do, one of the double-bass players surreptitiously produced a newspaper from his pocket and began to read. Monteux, who misses nothing in spite of a rather deceptively casual manner, suddenly tapped the stand with his stick, and the orchestra stopped. He looked in the direction of the double-bass player and, with a hint of a smile, softly queried, 'Good news?' Rehearsal nerves and tensions are not likely with such civilized, humorous—but always authoritative—direction. In the opera house and the concert hall Pierre Monteux, over a long period of years, has made music with the sensitivity of a fine artist and the single-mindedness of a man of the utmost integrity. As you would expect in a Frenchman, he does not easily harbour illusions. After a performance of Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations which he had conducted at a London concert, I heard him say, a little wryly, 'Your critics will write in

tomorrow's papers that it was very good, and my being French at that, but it was not Elgar. Ah, well. . . .'

The third concert during Harty's absence was, in fact, conducted by Elgar, and was devoted to *The Dream of Gerontius*. It was the last concert that great man ever conducted in Manchester, with whose musical fortunes his name had so long been linked, through the advocacy of Richter, the accumulating recognition of his creative genius, and his own memorable appearances on the rostrum. The final concert brought back Sir Thomas Beecham to discourse his two favourite composers—Delius and Mozart—and Richard Strauss (Strauss had conducted the Hallé at a Brand Lane Concert in 1922), for whose music he also had a deep affection. He had a rapturous reception from a packed audience, and made a speech declaring his intention of returning in the near future. He made good his promise, and in the following season conducted six concerts, including the Pension Fund Concert. He regaled the audiences with Delius and Mozart again, as well as Haydn, Sibelius and Strauss. Henry Holst was the soloist in the Sibelius Violin Concerto.

A period of guest conductors is bound to create a new and 'different' atmosphere in the concert hall, enabling audiences to hear interpretations which may—and do—differ considerably from those to which the constant presence of a regular conductor has conditioned them. Sometimes the change is a gain; sometimes a loss. I have heard more than one conductor say that after his orchestra has been in the hands of a number of guests it has taken him quite a while to bring it 'back' to where it was! And, of course, it can be unsettling for players, accustomed over a long period to one style and method of direction, to one kind of idiosyncrasy, to adapt themselves—in a short time—to variegated styles and methods. How often over the years has one heard the criticism, in relation to this or that orchestra, 'what it needs, of course, is a permanent conductor'! But, undoubtedly, the interest of the Manchester audiences was sharpened, and discrimination stimulated, by the employment of high-ranking guests, musicians in addition to those already mentioned, of the attainments of

Adrian Boult, Leslie Heward, Stravinsky, Nicolai Malko, Robert Heger. Both Boult and Heward made musical history in Birmingham and brought the status of orchestral music in that city to a notable level. Boult went to London to become Director of Music to the B.B.C., and the chief conductor of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra.

Heward had fought for years against constant ill-health and his early death robbed us of a conductor who, in the opinion of many, was on the way to greatness. He had both brilliance and deep understanding; he cared about music to the exclusion of almost everything else; and he never sought by flamboyant means to attract publicity, still less to distract attention from the composer. He could be a gay and charming companion, but he was always a serious artist. And he was as generous in his nature and in his dealings with his friends as he was in the expenditure of his energy in the cause of the music entrusted to his sensitive and unrelaxing care.

Distinguished foreign visitors like Malko and Heger were always sure of a warm welcome. Malko, from Russia, with great symphonic and operatic experience, and an almost literally bouncing style of conducting, was looked to for authoritative interpretations of Russian music, not least the moderns. An amusing companion, when work was over, he had a rare line in conjuring tricks; nor was he above showing his players his sleight-of-hand prowess. Malko, who was appointed in the early part of 1957 to succeed Sir Eugene Goossens as conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, was for a time, it will be remembered, conductor of the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra, which, alas, has now been lost to us.

When Strasbourg-born Robert Heger came to Manchester he had won his operatic (and symphonic) spurs in Germany and Austria and was known and highly regarded in most of the musical centres of Europe. Between the years 1926 and 1936 he was a familiar figure at Covent Garden and his Wagner performances there stamped him as a musician of strong impact. He has matched successes in the Old World with triumphs in the New. These

guests—and others—derived much pleasure and satisfaction from conducting the Hallé Orchestra and warmly expressed their admiration for its sterling qualities as an ensemble and for the brilliant technical skill and musicianship of individual players. It is worth emphasizing that the Hallé, happily, had never been plagued as London had by the 'deputy' system, by which the player who attended the rehearsals—even the last one before the concert—did not appear at the concert, because of another and more lucrative engagement, and sent a substitute. Foreign conductors, visiting London, were often bamboozled and infuriated by this practice. It was Henry Wood who first set his face against it when he was conductor of the Queen's Hall Orchestra, and it was as a result of this ban on deputies that the dissident players who left that orchestra founded the London Symphony Orchestra. In his *My Life of Music*, Sir Henry had this to say:

'... To find on a Monday morning that my orchestra contained seventy or eighty new faces—people I had never seen before in many instances—was beyond a joke. . . . So that it is not surprising that in 1904 I took up a definite position, Robert Newman (as usual) backing me up. . . . On this occasion he strode on to the platform in his customary business-like manner, halted, held up a paper, and read thus: "Gentlemen, in future there will be no deputies! Good morning. . . ." Nothing was said to either of us; we simply found that about forty members had resigned. . . . Those forty players then formed an orchestra of their own which they called the London Symphony Orchestra. . . . My action may have seemed high-handed at the time, but it at least provided London with two permanent orchestras of first-rate quality instead of only one. . . .'

Out of evil cometh good!

Among the interesting—and curious—phenomena of the Hallé's history in the period, roughly from the end of the First World War to 1933, must be counted the fluctuation in the

public's interest in, and support for, choral music. For many years the North had been rightly noted for church singing. From the days of Hallé onwards first-class performances of choral music were a feature of the Society's public activities. *Messiah*, of course, was always (or nearly always) a 'sell-out'. Handel may be said to have—not infrequently—given the Hallé balance sheet a healthier look. Public taste, then as now, inclined to the familiar, although, of course, the process of education and the enlargement of the musical horizon go on imperceptibly—so we hope! Sir Hamilton Harty's undoubted bias was for purely orchestral music, and Sir Thomas Beecham's was for opera, although, despite the advocacy and predilections of Richter, Balling and Beecham, opera did not flourish indigenously in Manchester. But before the First World War the choral achievements of the Hallé Society had marched side by side with the orchestral. The northern area, of which Manchester was the centre, was enormously rich in choirs, and Harty himself composed striking and most acceptable choral works. After the war, however, came a decline in both the enthusiasm for and the standards of the Hallé choral concerts. Malcolm Sargent had previously given brilliant choral performances which were greatly praised for their technical excellence and musical power, and Charles Hallé had always shown an unwavering devotion to the choir. It was round about 1927 that the interest of the public in choral concerts began to wane. Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, despite its many opportunities for the choir, did not attract, nor did Elgar's *The Kingdom*. In the 1929–30 season there were only three choral concerts, but one of them broke away from the beaten path to give Harty's *The Mystic Trumpeter*, Kodaly's *Psalmus Hungaricus* and Dvořák's *Te Deum*. They gave the public a chance to hear what the 'moderns' were doing in the choral field, and provided a stimulating change from perennial Handel and Bach.

After Sir Hamilton had left, the problem of the part the choir was to play in the future plans of the Society became acute. Some of the guarantors were led to ask, satirically, whether or not there was such a choir in existence, and, anyway, had it any function

in the musical life of Manchester other than the performance of *Messiah*? It was pointed out that recently choral concerts had meant loss; that audiences for them were diminishing; and that members of the choir were dissatisfied with the small share allocated to them in the music-making schedules. It had to be realized, it was argued for the Society, that choral concerts are a most expensive item, and the financial situation was such that it was a constant struggle to keep the Hallé in being. The blight of trade depression lay heavily on all artistic and cultural activities, and the grim economic facts had to be faced. A decision was eventually made to put Verdi's *Requiem* into one of the forthcoming programmes and to engage Sir Henry Wood to conduct it. There was a spate of preliminary publicity, and it was not unnaturally felt that the moving and dramatic qualities of that great masterpiece would ensure a triumphant success for the occasion. What, in fact, happened was that the public stayed away in large numbers and the Free Trade Hall was half-empty. It certainly looked as if choral music was losing its appeal.

The recruitment of men for the war had seriously affected local and church choirs, and when the war ended it was difficult to ensure adequate attendance at rehearsals. Other interests crowded in. Broadcasting brought to the home first-rate soloists and choirs from all over the country, and from abroad. The listeners' standards were thus subtly raised, and raised beyond the point at which the local product could successfully compete. I remember discussing this subject with Sir Henry Wood, and he made the point, among others, that, apart from reduced interest, there was slackness in application to the work involved. Hard training and constant rehearsal were the prerequisites to convincing choralism. He had been conducting in South Wales and had marked the event by giving the Welsh a stern lecture. I cannot estimate how salutary it proved to be. He told them that they had fine voices and that everybody knew that they loved singing. But that was not enough. They were fundamentally lazy and therefore could not and did not develop their undoubted potentialities. Only a few months ago a veteran and much-loved choral conductor in

the North told his audience on B.B.C. television that there was a serious decline in choralism, and that it was immensely difficult to keep choirs alive, owing, mainly, to the fact that people just would not come to rehearsals. So much is done for us today; the world in sound and sight can be so easily switched into our own sitting-rooms, that only the keenest and strongest-fibred will make the necessary (and satisfying) effort to 'do it yourself'.

Certain sections of the public continued to press for greater use of the Hallé Choir, but some guarantors were opposed to any scheme which would result merely in further losses. Special Saturday night concerts outside the normal Hallé scheme had been suggested. Mr. John Russell, at the end of 1934, wrote in *Musical Opinion* that the B.B.C., having dealt satisfactorily with the orchestral situation in the North, might also take action to help the choral societies in the same wide area, and suggested that more broadcasts of important choral concerts would be of considerable assistance, particularly if the services of their own orchestra in the North were included. And in the course of his articles, 'A History of the Hallé Concerts', he claimed that the policy was subsequently realized. Through all the chances and changes of (sometimes) 'outrageous fortune' the Hallé Choir, with its great orchestral partner, has survived to minister to the musical needs of a new but still greatly troubled age. Whatever the advantages to be gained from sound broadcasting and television, it would be a sore artistic deprivation, and a human loss, if we ever failed to produce and to nourish singers like Kathleen Ferrier and choirs like the Hallé and the Huddersfield.

The period of guest conductors after Harty's departure was mainly sustained by Sir Thomas Beecham and Dr. Malcolm Sargent—not then knighted—with John Barbirolli making several appearances to the immense pleasure of critics and public. Broadcasting also took some of these concerts to a far larger audience than could otherwise have enjoyed them. Elgar was to have conducted one of the concerts in this 1933-4 season, but was seriously ill, and his place was taken by Barbirolli who gave a glowing account of an all-Elgar programme which he had

accepted at short notice. Elgar was dead within a short time and the Hallé Society mourned the loss of a great musician who had had associations with it since Richter first produced the A flat Symphony twenty-six years before, and had also been a President of the Society. Strangely enough, a Delius concert, under Beecham, was also followed soon after by the death of the composer.

The 1934-5 season opened with a comment in the *Manchester Guardian* by its critic, Neville Cardus, that is still worth cherishing. 'The Hallé', he wrote, 'is still the only orchestra in the country that has behind it a long living tradition.' Early in 1935 there began Malcolm Sargent's close and stimulating association with the orchestra, which was to last for a number of years. Characteristic of his methods was his determination to give what choral concerts were planned—despite the decline in interest—with utterly adequate rehearsals: for Bach's B minor Mass he spent two weeks drilling the choir. It is of more than passing interest to record that during the guest-conductor period, shared, of course, by English and foreign conductors, the prevailing opinion among the majority of the Hallé devotees, of critics, of the leader at that time, Alfred Barker, was that the English batons were more successful—and better—than the imported variety. It is always hard, especially in music, to kill the notion that the home-product can possibly equal—still less excel—the foreign. The absence of a permanent conductor from the Hallé enabled Manchester to demonstrate that, certainly at that time in its musical history, the talents we had produced at home were at least adequate to the task of presenting great music—and in a wide repertoire—in a worthy manner.

Sir Thomas Beecham, with not dissimilar views from those of Barker, expressed his opinion that a permanent conductor represented the ideal solution for an orchestra; of course, the conductor would have to be ideal, too, for an indifferent conductor had a devitalizing effect on the players and produced a situation that was bound to be unsatisfactory all round. It would be wise, therefore, not to be precipitate. Let the right man be found first!

In the 1935-6 season, guest conductors were reduced in number to only three or four. There are, I suppose, defects in all systems. It is refreshing for an orchestra to get a change, now and then, from its regular chief, if the change is a good one. But it breaks up an orchestra's style, diminishes its artistic standards and lowers its musical morale if it is always having to adapt itself to the dissimilar methods of Mr. X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z. Nevertheless, the Hallé, under its guest conductors, maintained its high qualities with rare pertinacity and devotion. If it had not been consistently notable for such attributes there would be no centenary celebrations now. Three or four years before the Second World War a former leader in Charles Hallé's time, the redoubtable Willy Hess, revisited Manchester and, when asked what he thought of the orchestra at that moment, expressed unbounded admiration, adding that even in Hallé's period it had not the brilliance and verve, the ensemble and technique it now possessed. And that superb conductor of the classics, Weingartner, remarked that, though he had expected it to be good, he was agreeably surprised by its general excellence.

Meanwhile over Europe the shadows were gathering again. Germany was in the grip of Hitler and his Nazis.

The Barbirolli Story

Although so much is known about Barbirolli's life and work, especially in Manchester and the North, I feel that this centenary occasion should not omit at least a brief outline of his early days. It repays recapitulation and study, and the story, familiar to many though it be, may well encourage and stimulate others, in whatever walk of life, to follow their particular star with faith and courage.

John Barbirolli, christened Giovanni Battista, was nurtured into music on his father's and grandfather's side. He was born in Southampton Row, London, on 2 December 1899. Father and grandfather were violinists, and had played in leading orchestras in Italy and taken part in the first performance of Verdi's *Otello* at La Scala, Milan. They had also been associated with a young man named Arturo Toscanini at Brescia, a fact the maestro recalled when he first met young Barbirolli in London in 1930, and he remembered that his father's name was Lorenzo. Mrs. Barbirolli (Louise) came from the South of France. It is not surprising that the combined contribution of Italy and France should have produced—in London—an offspring whose destiny needed no astrological genius to predict.

London did not offer the two Barbirolli musicians an easy life. Those were not the days of regular salaries and contracts such as orchestral musicians enjoy today. You played one night at a symphony concert and the next night at a theatre—if you were good enough, and there was no doubt about the Barbirollis on that score. It should also be remarked that London had two regular symphony orchestras only: Queen's Hall and London Symphony. The Barbirollis' necessary weekly emoluments came mainly from the orchestras of large theatres such as the Empire

and Alhambra in Leicester Square. John Barbirolli recalls, and with pride, that his father spent his professional life 'in that triangle of the Victorian and Edwardian pleasure-ground—the Empire, Alhambra and Queen's Hotel'. His father's engagements included the conducting of Sunday after-dinner concerts at the Queen's Hotel in Leicester Square, and they attained much popularity. John McCormack made his London début at one of these concerts. He was then, of course, unknown, and he sang for a fee of one guinea. Within this musically active and stimulating area young John walked to his early educational disciplines at the Holborn Estate Grammar School. He saw the London Opera House being built, read the names of Henry Wood and Beerbohm Tree on the posters, and witnessed the exciting flurries of audiences into and out of Covent Garden Opera House. What an atmosphere for a youngster with the seeds of music germinating in his heart! John and his sister, Rosie, four years older, were initiated at home into the mysteries of the violin, which she later abandoned to become a pianist. Twelve years after John, brother Peter was born, and for him the viola was designated. And he plays today in the orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The Barbirolli *ménage* soon began to echo strongly, and not always uncacophonously, to the strains of eagerly inexpert music-making. Grandfather Antonio was the self-appointed tutor and master.

It is delightful to hear John reminisce about those days, when at the age of seven he used to walk about the room practising his fiddle. He couldn't sit still. His confessed fidgets got on the nerves of the old man—and interfered with the running of the home. So Grandfather went and bought the boy a 'cello, as much as to say—he may even have said it!—'Now fidget with that!'

John sat. He sat and practised with such successful concentration that when he was twelve he made his first public appearance at Queen's Hall, playing a concerto with the orchestra of the Trinity College of Music. He learnt all the classical 'cello concertos, and, what was even more important and valuable, the tremendous amount of sheer application necessary to achieve a performance

to satisfy at least three people—his grandfather, his father, himself. Prodigy nonsense was rigorously eschewed. Not only was the youngster made to work hard, he worked hard from his own inner compulsion. It was in his nature and it became his habit. Thus it has been right down to 1957 and the Centenary Year of the Hallé Orchestra. And he had precious opportunities to study and to learn from Henry Wood, Beecham, Kreisler, Pachmann, Paderewski, and to climb to the gallery at Covent Garden and immerse himself in the surge and swirl of the mighty operatic masterpieces. His mind roamed unfettered in the musical repertoire, and into the fascinating field of literature. The ambition to conduct a great orchestra was quietly born—and for the time left to fructify. A boy of his character, with his developing gifts, was preserved by his very nature from a dry, narrow specialism, either in art or in life. It was as natural as breathing to him to leave his 'cello for the kitchen to help his mother with her cooking. Good music and a good meal became for him congruous facets of a civilized life. If playing the 'cello was an art, so was living. He came to master both.

When he was sixteen there came an opportunity which must have had a big influence on his future: he joined Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra, and no musician, certainly not one of Barbirolli's perceptiveness and capacity for learning, could fail to benefit from the experience. Henry Wood carried craftsmanship to the point of genius. His knowledge and discipline were invaluable to a youngster who had the stuff of music in him. 'Timber', with his eagle eye, acute ear, rasping voice and imperturbable stick technique, helped to launch many a young musician into a bright and satisfying future. But before he had been under the ministrations of that long baton for twelve months, Barbirolli, then seventeen, joined the Suffolk Regiment, in the First World War, which was to end its grim story in twelve months' time, and send the young musician back to the task of making a living and developing his impatient gifts. Never a dilettante, always with his feet on the ground no matter how far and high his gaze ventured, he took any engagement that he

thought would further his aims. And he always wanted to be independent, to shape his own future. Cinema and hotel orchestras served his purpose just as opera and symphony orchestras did. He played as 'cellist with the British National Opera Company. He was learning, working, enlarging his artistic experience, perfecting his technique. He never succumbed to the ennui and cynicism (and worse) that often afflict the orchestral player. His ultimate goal always beckoned. By the time he was twenty-five he had brought into being the Barbirolli String Orchestra. He gave a series of concerts at the Chenil Galleries, Chelsea. He began to experiment in the art of conducting, and what better medium for a beginner than a small chamber orchestra? His practical wisdom never encouraged him to fly before he could walk. People, important people, began to talk about him, which is so much more helpful and productive than talking about yourself. That good man and shrewd artist, Frederic Austin, who was the dominating spirit in the British National Opera Company, spotted him, and engaged him to conduct opera at Covent Garden, and in four languages. In one week in the provinces, the young man who had not previously conducted an orchestra of more than a dozen players, took charge of three major operas. He was only thirty when he became Musical Director and Chief Conductor of the Covent Garden Opera Company, a position he occupied for three most valuable years. His performances attracted wide attention and won the plaudits of the critics and the public. A new force had come to our rostrums.

Then came the appointment to the Scottish Orchestra, in Glasgow. Almost a hundred years old, it had boasted conductors of the eminence of Von Bülow, Sullivan, Cowen, Manns, Henschel, and the Polish Mlynarski. Apart from the Hallé it was the only orchestra outside London with regular seasons of concerts. It had been well supported financially by good friends. The First World War suspended its activities and, when hostilities ended, guest conductors—Koussevitzky, Weingartner, Ronald and others—were engaged. Barbirolli took over in the 1933-4 season, his first permanent symphonic post. Opportunity—and

hard work—again spread before him. The orchestra was going through a lean period and he began at once to put things right, with warm public and intelligent municipal support. It was not long before the organization pulsed with new life. The appointment also had a happy and important significance for Barbirolli's personal life. The first oboe of the orchestra was the tall, talented, delightful Evelyn Rothwell (of whom more later). She and Barbirolli became close friends, and later they were married. Barbirolli expended his energies with prodigal devotion to the orchestra, and it seemed, before the third season was over, that the happy and fruitful association would go on. But at this point Toscanini resigned from the conductorship of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Naturally, the musical world, including the conductor of the Scottish Orchestra, speculated with sharp curiosity about the succession to Toscanini. First, Furtwängler in Germany was invited, but this provoked so much ideological antagonism in America that the idea was abandoned. On whom, then, would the mantle of Arturo fall? Barbirolli was away conducting in Holland. No one could have been more surprised than he to be invited by the New York manager and impresario, Arthur Judson, to come to America, which he had never hitherto visited, to share the conductorship of the great orchestra for the 1936-7 season on a tentative basis with such eminent musicians as Stravinsky and Rodzinski. Scotland did not stand in his way and he accepted. The management of the Scottish Orchestra felt that the orchestra as well as its conductor shared the honour attaching to such an important and glamorous offer. Our press made it the occasion for acid comments on our neglect—or alleged neglect—of such brilliant gifts as Barbirolli's in his own country.

Thus, in 1936, a young man aged thirty-six sailed from his own country to take on what was generally regarded as the most important and certainly the most lime-lighted post in the whole musical world.

I met him in London just before he left for New York. It was my first meeting with him. I fell at once under the spell of his personality. We lunched and talked in the National Liberal Club.

I shall never forget the heart-warming encounter, the first, I am proud and happy to say, of many more to come. Before we parted I felt as if I had known him for a long time. He was modest, frank, uninhibited, and confident about what he could do. He certainly knew what he wanted to do. He knew the size of his responsibilities. He knew the implications of the successorship to Toscanini. He also knew that on both sides of the Atlantic there were those who, as always, shrugged their deprecating shoulders, shook their sceptical heads, meanly muttered their 'knowing' prognostications. The event gave the answer to them all. Barbirolli was invited for one season; he stayed for seven years. In their usual fashion the American Press spotlighted the appointment and the unknown man, who, they were not slow to point out, had never been given one of the big London orchestras. There were then half a dozen big names—British names—busily conducting, regularly or frequently, in London. What, I wonder, is the difference between the first-class director of a provincial orchestra and the first-class director of a London orchestra. On the not always unfair assumption that some provincial orchestras may be below the top metropolitan standard, a conductor's achievement in the provinces could be a greater compliment to him than success in London.

What was Barbirolli's attitude to the American Press and to his new and critical public? It was what those who knew him would have expected. Honest, open-eyed, unpretentious, and also unafraid. Heavily condensing press statements and personal interviews, what fundamentally remains is that the 'so young-looking' conductor from Britain had no intention of trying to be another Toscanini. There was only one Toscanini. He was prepared to give 'all I've got'. He told journalists that he was a simple person. They also gathered that he had a mind of his own which he proposed to use. He and they were aware, of course, that he would be sharing his first season with six other conductors, and that he was not then in the position of the musical director. The tough American critics and reporters were obviously surprised—and also quietly impressed—by Barbirolli's modesty. He did not put on a single pose or try to hit a headline. They were

the headline merchants; he was concerned with the big job he had undertaken and with the music through which alone he could and would introduce himself to the American public. As he himself has said, his first real ordeal and the most important moment of his visit was his initial rehearsal with the famous orchestra. From what is known, all went well. He established immediate *rapport* with the players, and we know how hard-bitten they can be—everywhere! And they at once liked the small-statured, smooth-shaven, Napoleonic-looking young man whose sincerity matched his ardour and whose capacity for work equalled his devotion to the art for the sake of which that capacity was always fully mobilized.

His first concert in Carnegie Hall on 5 November 1936 was a striking and gratifying success. Cool, perhaps sceptical, critics, who came to find out, found out, and went away to write notices some of which were glowing and all of which, in general terms, testified to Barbirolli's mastery of the occasion and of his medium. The oldest orchestra in the world, now under perhaps the most boyish-looking conductor in the world, gave of its best with utter conviction. Those who made the music on that evening were not deluded by any cheap temptations to invoke magic and weave spells. Barbirolli and the New York players dedicated themselves as honest musicians to a programme which consisted of:

Suite for Strings—Purcell (arranged Barbirolli)

Symphonic Poem: 'The Tale the Pine Trees Knew'—Arnold
Bax

Symphony in C major (K425)—Mozart

Symphony No. 4 in E minor—Brahms

The Carnegie Hall public, somewhat self-consciously sophisticated, closely scrutinized the trim, taut, serious figure of the man who was taking the maestro's place as he walked to the rostrum, and wondered. They went away with heightened curiosity and with much to talk about. The conductor had ten more weeks of the season ahead of him. I refrain from quotation of the critics' notices, as Charles Rigby has done ample justice to them in his

Biographical Sketch: John Barbirolli, in which he also admirably outlined the history of the orchestra.

Within a month of his first concert the management of the orchestra announced Barbirolli's appointment as musical director and conductor for the three ensuing seasons. He thus became the first full-time conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra since 1921 when Josef Stransky was conductor. Barbirolli went from strength to strength with the American critics and public. His programmes were an illuminating blend of the great classics, new works, and works new to his audiences. Nor did he neglect American music. His illustrious predecessor had never been known as a consummately skilful programme-builder or as an intrepid venturer into the field of contemporary music. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic Hitler was preparing for his onslaught on Western civilization. In the summer of 1938 Barbirolli had paid a visit to his homeland, and so menacing in its implications was the international situation at that time that there were moments when he thought he would never be able to return to New York, and that, instead, he would be taking his place in the trenches. He did not know then of the strange, unreal and brief respite to be vouchsafed by Munich. When he did return, according to plan, to America he gave a vivid picture of life in London in those days of torturing uncertainty, a picture which included such a fantastic episode as that of his sister's trying a gas mask on his baby niece. On his return trip from England on the liner *Normandie*, one of his fellow passengers was Toscanini. Barbirolli's life in New York, as everywhere else, before and since, was devoted to his music-making with few social relaxations. He has never cultivated society—and there was plenty he could have cultivated. In his bachelor quarters he worked at his scores until the small hours. He would have a break in a drug-store, sitting on a stool drinking coffee. He would also escape to his small kitchen to cook one of his special meals for his friends—late at night. Lunch was—and is—a very ephemeral feast for John Barbirolli. How he sustains his incredible energy is his own secret 'miracle'.

In 1939 he appeared in public as a 'cellist at the Twelfth Night Celebration at the New York Lotus Club—this was the first time he had assumed this role in America—and played quartets with his leader, another violinist, and our own—at least he *was* our own—William Primrose, the viola virtuoso. He took the orchestra to Boston and Newark, New Jersey, winning for the players and himself the highest critical praise. His 1939 vacation was again spent in England, and during this holiday he was married to Evelyn Rothwell, and she joined her husband in America, a little later intensifying still further, and with the utmost charm and geniality, the impact already made by her utterly unspoilt husband. Soon after both had settled in their home, a suite in Hampshire House looking out from the topmost towers of the teeming city, they and the orchestra set out on a tour, which included Washington and Chicago, and involved fourteen concerts in all. In the Chicago programme was Weinberger's Suite *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree*—a novelty for the city—composed for Barbirolli and first introduced at Carnegie Hall. Rhapsodic welcomes marked the entire trip, and official receptions underlined the story of unbroken artistic success and informed public enthusiasm. It must be realized that cities like Chicago and Boston, to mention only two, had their own great traditions of orchestral performance and interpretation, and visiting orchestras and conductors were naturally put under an evaluating microscope from which test only those of the highest merit could survive. No mere *legerdemain* could get away with it! The Sunday broadcasts from Carnegie Hall had, of course, made Barbirolli's name and performances known to millions, thereby greatly whetting the appetite for his appearance in the flesh in other parts of the United States.

Early in 1940 it was announced that Barbirolli was to be re-engaged for the next two seasons, in the first of which he would conduct for twenty-two weeks out of the thirty, the guest conductor being Dimitri Mitropoulos, the Greek maestro of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. March 1940 saw the New York players and their conductor in Philadelphia, Barbirolli's

first visit to a city whose orchestra was world-famous, at least for its high-powered gramophone recordings of familiar masterpieces. In performances of Wagner there, one critic wrote that 'Barbirolli reached heights of emotional eloquence and incandescence that quite dwarfed recent performances we have heard here'. Apart from his visits outside New York with the orchestra, Barbirolli was also greatly welcomed as guest conductor to other American orchestras. Vancouver, for example, specially took him—and his wife—to its heart. His friend, composer and pianist, Arthur Benjamin, was living there, and they spent happy and relaxing hours together. At the first concert (18 May 1940) Benjamin was the soloist in César Franck's *Symphonic Variations*, and the rest of the programme included 'O Canada', 'God Save the King', 'Land of Hope and Glory'—with a choir of seven hundred school children—and Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. An audience of six thousand gave the conductor an overwhelming ovation. Barbirolli journeyed back to New York via Hollywood Bowl to give concerts in the famed open-air amphitheatre, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in their 'Symphony Under the Stars' series. Here his *début* drew an audience of twelve thousand people, stirred to the depths not only by the performances but also by the realization that the conductor's homeland stood alone in the fight against Nazi Germany—his homeland which had been given only ninety days to survive. Between December 1940 and the end of January 1941, Barbirolli conducted, after his Christmas holiday, in Detroit, San Francisco and Los Angeles again. By this time the Battle of Britain had been won, but London was being fiercely blitzed by the Luftwaffe and Barbirolli suffered deep and constant anxiety about his family in the thick of the bombardments.

The New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra reached its centenary in 1942 and there were fitting celebrations of this important historical event. Toscanini was among the distinguished guest conductors invited to participate during this gala period of concert-giving. Pearl Harbour had happened and America was in the war, alongside Britain. The Anniversary Concert was

conducted by Barbirolli, and at the end of the brilliant celebratory season he fulfilled his passionate desire to go home to utilize his holiday to give his services to music in Britain, where orchestras were struggling hard for survival to meet the clamorous need for great music which the trials and dangers of black-out and bombs had stirred in the hearts of the people. Through the good offices of his old friend A. V. Alexander (now Lord Alexander), who was First Lord of the Admiralty in the Churchill Government, and a life-long devotee of music, he was able to cross the Atlantic in a Norwegian freighter, defying the worst of U-boat attacks, on a voyage that took just over three weeks. Concerts and tours with the Royal Philharmonic, London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras occupied three weeks of almost daily concerts all over England and Scotland. The remaining seven weeks of his holiday—‘some holiday!’ you may well add—were spent in two perilous trips from and back to America. But he had been home. He had seen how the people were ‘taking it’, what music meant to them, and he had had the opportunity to serve them and his fellow musicians. During his stay I remember meeting him in London, not far from Oxford Street—by accident. His eyes were dim, his voice shook, his whole demeanour was sad. We went for a drink, and he needed it. He told me that he had been looking at some of the scenes of devastation wrought by Nazi bombers. Queen’s Hall, near by, where he had played and conducted, was a grimly gaping shell. As we talked I realized how deeply moved he was. He has a great love of place, of the sights and sounds he knew in his early years. His roots went deep into his beloved London. I am sure that what he saw and felt on that day, and during the rest of his visit, influenced him profoundly, and strongly motivated his decision a year later to return to us, to share the British people’s sufferings, and to rehabilitate our oldest orchestra. He is that sort of person.

His return to New York—for the last time—was made in a banana boat of the Fyffe Company, in convoy, which, though encountering a U-boat pack *en route*, safely made the voyage back, with a day to spare compared with the home crossing.

Before opening his final season in New York, Barbirolli conducted the Los Angeles Orchestra again, for a period of three months, in concerts arranged for American fighting men, who were as eager for the solace and uplift of music as were their British counterparts back home. Then he returned to New York and Carnegie Hall. But not for long. He was in Los Angeles when he received an invitation from Mr. Philip Godlee, then chairman of the Hallé Society, to return home to rebuild the Hallé Orchestra. He sent back a warm acceptance and prepared to return home, not this time for a holiday, not even the sort of 'holiday' involving almost a nightly concert, but to embark on the biggest undertaking ever in his remarkable and meteoric career. He was forty-four.

This was big news for America as well as for Manchester and Britain. The American and Canadian Press featured it boldly. A New York paper commented:

'... to be invited to the permanent conductorship of the famous Hallé Orchestra means that Barbirolli is acknowledged to be one of the few great conductors in the world by those who are competent to judge. . . . It is certain he will meet many old friends there who will gladly welcome him as one returning home, unspoiled by his halo of success. All music lovers will wish him well.'

Many other comments were in the same spirit and all realized that Manchester's gain was America's loss, and that a new glorious era was to begin for the Hallé. To an old friend and journalistic colleague of mine, H. Hessel Tiltman, Barbirolli in a New York interview remarked on his great happiness on being allowed to make his contribution to British music at this time. And he added: 'I have given one hundred and forty "first performances" here. One of my most thrilling experiences was a performance of Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, played on a perfect summer's night in Hollywood Bowl to 15,000 people listening in perfect silence. . . .' Regarding the work that lay ahead of him in England, Barbirolli said that

'the great thought in my mind is that, guided by my great predecessors, Hallé, Richter, Balling and Harty, I hope to make the future of the Hallé as worthy and as great as its past. If from this side of the Atlantic I may intrude my opinion on any aspect of orchestral music, I would like to say just this—I have noticed a tendency on both sides of the Atlantic for the public to flock always to hear the old favourites and it is still a great problem for a conductor and his management to play much new or experimental music without danger of serious financial loss. Of course, this tendency can be largely explained at the present time by the fact that in these days people mostly go to concerts after a hard day's work, seeking relaxation. But it is hoped that with more normal times there will come a return of musical curiosity. It is good for conductor, orchestra and audience to tread new paths, and so avoid becoming stale through constant repetition.'

Characteristically, Barbirolli used the occasion of the interview to pay a tribute to 'my old friend', Sir Hamilton Harty (who died in 1941). 'During his period the Hallé reached heights that have certainly never been surpassed. . . .'

Barbirolli's last concert with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra was in March 1943, the end of which was marked by many minutes of applause, in which gratitude, admiration, goodwill and nostalgia affectionately mingled. After he had said, simply, 'There has come an end to my seven years' here,' audience and orchestra rose spontaneously and sang 'Auld Lang Syne'. Everyone, not least the conductor, remembering the loyalty and affection the New York audiences had given him, was greatly moved. There was still to be one more concert before he left the United States—in the city of Vancouver which, with its strong English affinities, had become a home from home during his busy and fruitful years in America. There, again, the send-off he was given would have touched the heart of a man of much less warm and responsive nature than John Barbirolli.

On his previous voyages to and from America, Barbirolli had

had to face the submarine menace. On the last journey home he and his wife had accepted seats, at Lisbon, in a plane leaving for London in two days' time instead of travelling by the plane for which they had booked. This machine was shot down by the Germans in the crazy belief that Winston Churchill was travelling in it. None of its passengers survived, and they included the famous film star, Leslie Howard. But for this strange quirk of fate the Barbirolli and Hallé story would never have been written.

So he came back, finally, after seven years, to begin the most onerous task that could be demanded of any musician: the resuscitation of a once great orchestra that, through financial difficulties and the catastrophic consequences of the Second World War, had become only a pale shadow of its former self. He left the most glamorous rostrum in the world, one of the wealthiest and finest orchestras in the world, to begin from scratch to re-create and rebuild an orchestra with a history of eighty-five years' service to music in our own land. It required high courage to go to New York; it required more to come home to Manchester. In the one case, there was the almost frightening aura of an unparalleled reputation; in the other, the artistic and even the physical magnitude of a task that might well destroy a reputation rapidly growing in lustre and significance. In New York the orchestra was world-famous, the conductor almost unknown; in Manchester the conductor was now world-famous, the orchestra facing dissolution. Barbirolli set about both tasks with the bright eye, the eager vitality and the serene confidence of a young man taking up a challenge to match his will, his faith, his great gifts, his passion for his work.

There had been really only three previous conductors of the Hallé Orchestra: Hallé himself, Richter and Harty. That in itself is an unusual record, one that indicates the establishment and the maintenance of a true tradition, not in a static but in an organically developing sense, during almost a century of musical achievement (and with two world wars to help!). Barbirolli arrived in Manchester in June 1943, and began work at once. He faced a

position in which the fortunes of the orchestra had dwindled perilously, although tribute must be paid to those conductors who, despite all difficulties, rendered good service in this trying pre-Barbirolli period of uncertainty and decline: notably Malcolm Sargent who did much to keep the Hallé flag flying. Many had shaken their heads when contemplating the future of the Hallé. The blitz had destroyed its home in Free Trade Hall; upwards of thirty former members of the orchestra had elected to stay with the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra; fewer than that number were available as a nucleus for whatever reorganization Barbirolli would put into effect. To most men the outlook would have proved daunting and dispiriting; and Barbirolli, a realist in practical matters, and with immense orchestral experience, as player and chief, could have had no illusions. But he had returned expressly to save the Hallé and nothing would alter his determination. Nor must it be forgotten that all this time the Services and industry were approaching their maximum demands on the manpower of the nation.

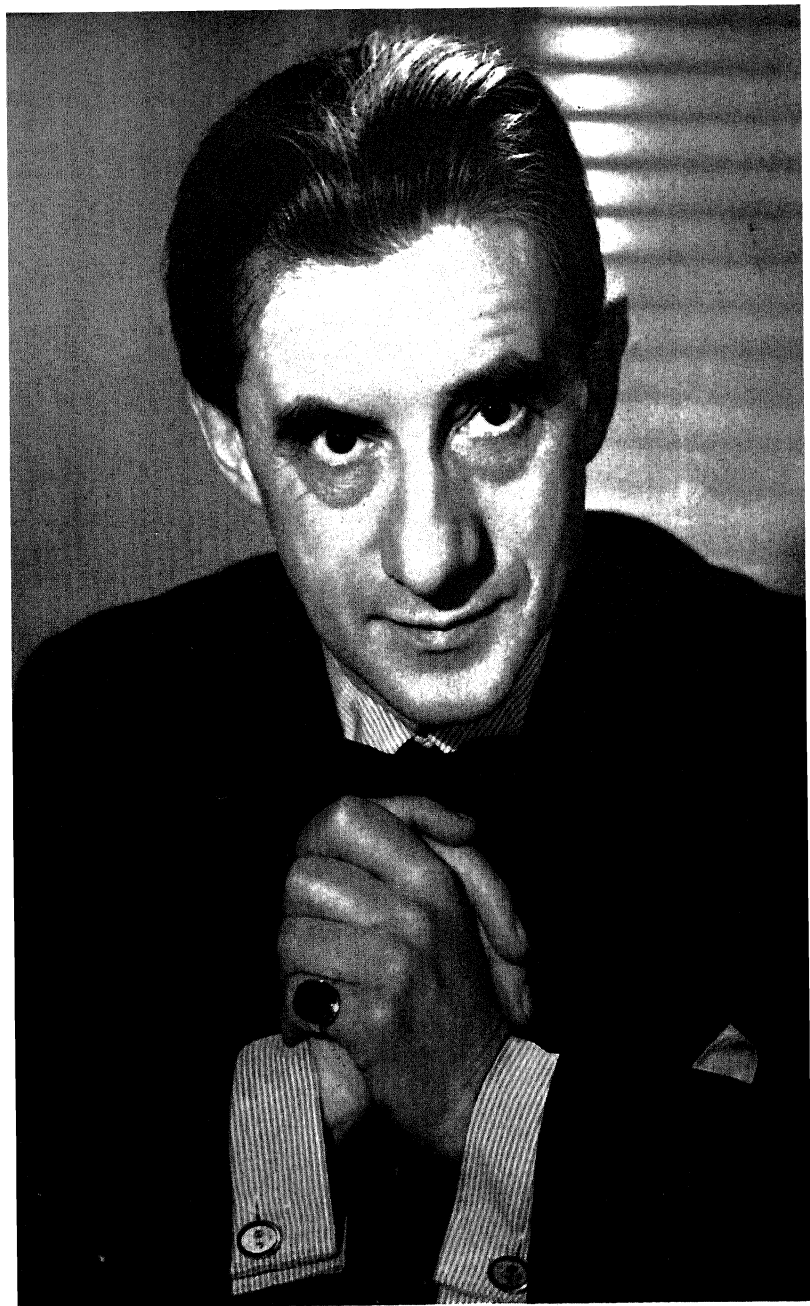
He began his intensive search for talent all over the North, wherever it could be recruited. He held auditions for six hours a day for three weeks and travelled also to London on the same quest. Young and inexperienced players came forward from the Royal Academy, Royal College of Music, the Royal Manchester College of Music. He told them that he would teach them to become efficient orchestral musicians, to be an integral part of an orchestral ensemble, and there was no ban on women. What he insisted on was that his recruits should work with everything they had. He did not spare himself in his search; he did not propose to spare himself when the search was over. Anyway, he could not, for having assembled the individual instrumentalists, they had then to be welded into a cohered and disciplined unit. After 'combing the country', a full complement of seventy players, including of course the acceptable nucleus, was gathered together. It was a young orchestra, the average age being about twenty-six, with twenty-four women. The strings were drawn from Lancashire and Yorkshire, and among the women members

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HALLÉ

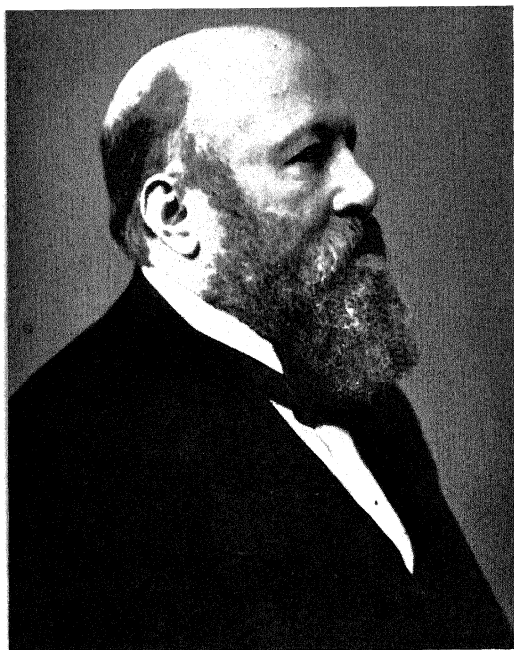
were two horn players and one double-bass. The 'old Hallé' gave its farewell concert at Stretford in June 1943, and it was also a memorial concert to Leslie Heward, who had been a guest conductor with the orchestra, and who had begun his musical career as a boy chorister in Manchester Cathedral. Malcolm Sargent conducted, with Barbirolli sitting in the audience.

The new Hallé was being shaped and moulded, and we must not forget the debt owed to the foresight and courage of Philip Godlee, big business man and enthusiastic amateur musician, who was not content that the Hallé should meander on, relying on guest conductors, lacking permanent direction and a discernible goal. Not only was Barbirolli called to his herculean task, but it was also planned that the new orchestra should tour the country and give no fewer than two hundred concerts a year. Mr. T. E. Bean, now the general manager of the Royal Festival Hall, was appointed general manager of the Hallé, and with an administrative staff to cope with the new problems, not just the secretary and a typist as previously. Only one hall was available for the subscription concerts in mid-week, the Albert Hall, a mission hall, standing opposite the rubble of the old Free Trade Hall. For Sunday afternoon concerts King's Hall, in Belle Vue Pleasure Gardens, could be used, so that, with the duplication of the Albert Hall Concert, about ten thousand people would be able to see and hear the new Hallé. The loyalties of other cities in the North were readily engaged to come to the aid of the Hallé, notably Sheffield, which made a grant of £5,000 to the Philharmonic Society so that it could regularly engage the Hallé. The appeal of the Hallé, with its great past and promising future, did not fall on deaf ears.

Barbirolli had from 1 June to 5 July before presenting himself and his re-formed Hallé Orchestra to the public at the opening concert of the Bradford Festival Week. Rehearsals took place in the disused St. Peter's Schoolroom in Hewitt Street, a building more suitable in appearance and in its background for the dark and dank enterprises of a modern Fagin than for the re-establishment of an orchestra and the re-creation of great music.



SIR JOHN BARBIROLLI



Left HANS RICHTER

Below HAMILTON HARTY



But for Barbirolli and his players the environment did not matter. Day after day, for the whole week, the slogan and the fact was: work, work, work. The strings rehearsed for three hours, the brass and wood-wind for three, and the whole orchestra for three. And when the nine-hours stint was over Barbirolli went home to spend further hours in the night, bowing parts. For the final rehearsal the orchestra went to the Houldsworth Hall, and a number of music critics were invited. The *Yorkshire Post* critic was categorical. He wrote that 'there can be no doubt that a miracle has been achieved . . .'.

And now the ordeal and challenge of the first public concert awaited, at the Princes Theatre, Bradford. Public curiosity ran higher, probably, than expectation. Just over a month was the time the conductor and the orchestra had had to 'find' each other, to be transformed from a collection of largely inexperienced players into an instrumental entity. What would it sound like? In the theatre there were lively memories of the Hallé's great days in the past. Comparisons were inevitable. For all, not least for John Barbirolli, the test was severe. And what was really known, among the public, of the almost demoniacal exertions in Hewitt Street, of the orchestral 'skeleton' that had confronted him when he arrived in Manchester with the plaudits of the enthusiasts, the discerning and critical enthusiasts of another continent in his ears? This artistic launching upon the waters of British music brought the critics to Bradford from all parts of the country. The 'capital' of the woollen industry buzzed with intense interest and speculation.

The orchestra was to play throughout the week, but it was on its first concert that the eyes, ears and musical judgment of England were focused. The programme, which opened with the *Meistersinger* Overture, also contained Delius's *Song of Summer*, Tchaikovsky's Overture-Fantasia *Romeo and Juliet* and Brahms's Second Symphony. There was a packed audience. The critic of the *Manchester Guardian*, Granville Hill, after mentioning the obvious fact of the youth and orchestral inexperience of some of the players and that the orchestra had had no more than a week's

rehearsals, went on to prophesy that 'in a little while the new Hallé ensemble should show a splendid unity and eloquence . . .'. The 'launching' had been made on a remarkably even keel and it was undoubted that in the trial runs all tests of stability and adequacy would be passed. At the end of the week Barbirolli was reported in an interview to be highly pleased with the musical and financial success of the concerts. Hundreds of people had had to be turned away. To the public, after a rousing ovation, he had said, with simple truth: 'I have been entrusted with a very great mission—that the name and fame of this great orchestra shall not, under my guidance, achieve less honour in the future than it has done in the past.'

The Hallé's next engagements were to be in Scotland—a series of concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow, a week in each city. Once more arduous rehearsals in Manchester preceded the trip. Scotland, of course, remembered how Barbirolli had revitalized the Scottish Orchestra before he went to America, and the two Scottish cities gave him and the Hallé the friendliest possible greetings, which the performances amply justified. The Hallé was playing itself in with consummate skill and growing popularity; it was also enlarging, as was intended, what might be called its 'geographical connotation'. It certainly belonged to Manchester, was part of the city's pulsating life. But it was also acquiring for itself a national importance once more. In years it was the oldest orchestra in Britain; in personnel it was the youngest; in reputation it was on the way to being called our 'premier' orchestra.

After Scotland, concerts were given in other provincial centres before the excitedly awaited Manchester début. This was on 15 August 1945, with the war still in progress, but with the Allied victory in sight and the hunger for music still unsatiated, sharpened with exhilaration now, no longer edged with dark forebodings of disaster. The programme consisted of the following works: Wagner's *Meistersinger* Overture, Debussy's *Prelude A L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. The hall was filled to capacity by an audience eager to welcome for the first time on the domestic

hearth the reborn orchestra, destined to maintain and enhance the fame its predecessor had brought to Manchester and to Britain. It was at once obvious to those critics and others who had heard the first concert at Bradford that the period of 'indulgence' for the orchestra's newness was to be much shorter than, according to the bald facts, seemed possible. Granville Hill wrote that 'a good deal of the orchestral playing was indeed finer than any we have heard in Manchester for many years'. Public enthusiasm boiled over, as it did in Sheffield when the new Hallé presented itself there for the first time. Concerts in Manchester's suburbs, and for war workers (under the aegis of E.N.S.A.) followed. At one of these, in Wigan, the biggest applause was accorded to Debussy's *L'Après-midi*, in competition with *Meistersinger* and Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. Barbirolli was staggered, recalling that the Debussy work was hissed on its first hearing in Paris!

In January of the following year Barbirolli and the orchestra visited Birmingham and there was more praise from the critics. He himself had frequent invitations to conduct in London, among them that of opening the one-hundred-and-thirty-second season of the Royal Philharmonic Society, which is the oldest in the world. Soon there came indications of a possible crisis in the Hallé's affairs. London wanted Barbirolli for operatic and symphonic performances with the London Symphony Orchestra. Musical merits apart, London was, after all, an international centre for music in a sense that, geographically, Manchester could not be. Moreover, the Manchester Corporation's financial support in the task of remaking the Hallé was neither impressive nor encouraging, even by comparison with the efforts of other cities. A permanent place in London for a conductor of Barbirolli's growing power and eminence must have seemed a strong inducement. A man concerned only with his own reputation and advancement would have found it impossible to resist. There was natural perturbation in the Hallé Society and among the music-lovers of Manchester and the North. It did not need prophetic vision to assume that Barbirolli's translation to London would

probably mean the death of the Hallé, the abandonment of the great enterprise so newly and brilliantly begun.

What went on in Barbirolli's mind, faced with this crushing decision, was revealed when, at the end of a Belle Vue concert, with the vast arena reverberating with the acclamation of the audience, he turned to T. E. Bean and said, 'One simply can't leave *that*'. The loyalty of the conductor, matched by that of his audiences, in which were many new, young supporters to whom the magic casements of music were freshly opening, had made the future secure. The musical and personal relationship now created in the life of Manchester was too precious to be broken. The conductor's concentrated enthusiasm and tremendous work in an incredibly short period had fired the players—and the public. Not only was the Hallé to survive but it was clearly destined for a more vigorous life than ever. This was made possible by many factors, among them the loyalty, skill and devotion of the orchestra; the backing of the Hallé Concerts Society; and unwavering support of a public which realized that the orchestra had achieved 'a new birth of freedom'. But more than to anyone or anything else, it was due to the inspiring and rejuvenating genius of one man—John Barbirolli. This indefatigable crusader never deviated from his ideals or lost sight of the most practical necessities in the process of creating a new instrument with the requisite power, precision, subtlety and responsiveness for its true artistic purpose.

A sidelight on his strength and integrity was provided by his attitude when he took over the direction of the Hallé to the question of the place of piano concertos in the programmes. The popularity of this *genre* is undisputed. There are many concert-goers today, as there have always been, for whom the piano concerto is the *pièce de résistance*. It does not really matter what concerto it is, although it does probably matter more who plays it. When Barbirolli first saw the programmes for the Bradford Festival Week in which, as already recounted, he and the Hallé made their bow to the public and played at all seven concerts, five piano concertos had been scheduled for the week. He at once

refused to conduct them. He had not travelled from America and spent frantically keyed-up days and nights assembling and rehearsing a new orchestra merely in order to have the opportunity of accompanying five guest artists. The Committee of the Bradford Concert Society hurried to Manchester to discuss the impasse. They wanted the concertos. The usual arguments about box-office popularity were vigorously produced. Barbirolli was adamant. It was the Hallé Orchestra that he was presenting to the public, not a series of concertos. He would agree to accompany one and one only. And one only it was, and that happened to be the Grieg in A minor, played with consummate artistry by Clifford Curzon.

Of course, the conductor's attitude was misunderstood by some, and no doubt the prolonged applause at the end of the concerto was intended, to some extent at least, to indicate to Barbirolli a contrary view on the part of the public to his as represented by his interdict. None the less the greatest ovation was reserved for the orchestra at the end of a triumphant evening. In an interview with a Yorkshire paper, Barbirolli clarified his point of view. What he objected to was not concertos but their abuse. 'Concertos are among the world's best music and they will play their due part in the Hallé Concert schemes.' And, ever since, his programmes have unmistakably confirmed that statement. He could and would not allow himself to be a victim of any fetish, or cease to advocate, and ensure the maintenance of the orchestra's full claims, particularly an orchestra just beginning a new life and having to establish itself—for the second time—in the musical history of Britain. He was also concerned not only to minister as satisfyingly as he could to the public taste as he found it, but gradually to enlighten and inform it, to take it into new territories, and present new works that are worthy to be heard. He told some American cities that he envied the lot of colleagues in the early part of the twentieth century who were able to introduce new works—which are now masterpieces—by such men as Richard Strauss, Elgar, Debussy, Delius, Ravel. At the same time the public expectation of 'masterpieces' all the time

meant that works of high quality, without being 'masterpieces', were appraised at much less than their true value.

And what of the extent and depth of the curiosity of the public—everywhere? Barbirolli confessed in New York that he heard with 'almost incredulous astonishment' that when new American works were announced in the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra's programmes many subscribers sought to have their tickets transferred to concerts at which these works were not to be played. 'This', he told the musical journalists, 'can mean only one thing—that they are prepared to damn a new work even before hearing it, which, to say the least, is a little premature and unfair. If a person hears such a work and doesn't like it, he is entitled to his opinion, but just to stay away certainly does not help the Society or the conductor in their efforts to give new music its proper chance.' He realized also that this reluctance to share in musical experimentation was probably due to the fact that we live in a troubled world from which it is difficult to find some escape. None the less, living composers must be encouraged, and it is the duty of those who provide the public with music not to live completely in the past. He acted on his beliefs. In one season, out of seventy-one composers scheduled, twenty-five were living. Of his first season's programmes in Carnegie Hall a critic commented: 'More novelties have been introduced in one season than in a decade under Toscanini.' Apart from his support for modern music, in America and in Manchester, Barbirolli has put living British composers ever in his debt by his first performances in recent years with his orchestra at the annual festivals of British Contemporary Music at Cheltenham. The mere list of them is impressive; musically, they have represented the artistic core of the Cheltenham enterprise, and wise programme planning has ensured that the second half of the concerts has been given up to great classics. Having attended the festivals, I can testify from personal experience to the intelligent enthusiasm with which the new works have been received. Several of our young composers have talked to me of the gratitude and pride they felt on account of the loving care with which Barbirolli prepares their

works in exacting and intensive rehearsals and enables the public to hear them presented with the maximum fidelity and understanding. A 'send-off' of that quality for a new composition contributes more than is possibly realized to the eventual establishing of its place in the concert repertory.

Barbirolli was also more and more in demand as a guest conductor all over Europe. Wherever he went he was hailed as one of the great conductors of the time. In Vienna, with its unequalled musical traditions, the proud home of the magical Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, where he conducted Verdi's *Requiem* and *Aïda*, his performances did not suffer by comparison with those of the giants who had held sway there. Phrases like 'born conductor of opera', 'a man completely dominating his subject', 'he does not interpret, he performs' peppered the notices of the Viennese critics. Later, as will be seen, he was to be heard in Austria with his own Hallé.

In the Birthday Honours in June 1948 he received the honour of a knighthood to the delight of his hosts of friends and his faithful audiences in all parts of the country, but especially, of course, in Manchester. It was in that year, also, that he refused the B.B.C.'s invitation to him to succeed Sir Adrian Boult as conductor-in-chief of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra. He told an interviewer then that he had done so because

'in Manchester I have found an audience willing to walk hand in hand with me and explore great music. The wonderful new audience we have built up at Belle Vue is of my own class, the lower middle class. Great foreign artists never fail to be impressed by it. It is an audience which believes in my ideas and ideals. The way they have turned out in snow and fog has mattered to me a great deal, as I am rather a human person.

'It has been a tremendous decision for me to make. . . . I shall be fifty years of age next year, and this is the last decade of my career—the best ten years of my life backed by all my experience. I have worked for nearly six years under difficult conditions to produce a great orchestra. I have withstood the

temptation of going to London with greater financial backing. If the Hallé were to become anything less than first-class I should have no hesitation in leaving, for I owe you a duty to give you a first-class orchestra.'

He spoke of the orchestra's loyalty: 'I am not the kind of person who forgets. I have always been interested in young people and talent. There are young players here in Manchester comparable to those anywhere—and one doesn't throw these things away easily.'

In the conditions agreed to between him and the Hallé Concerts Society he did not stipulate for any financial advantage for himself. That was characteristic too. It was also agreed that the minimum weekly rate for the players was to be increased from £10 to £13; that the orchestra should be enabled to go abroad at least once a year; and that on the rebuilding of the Free Trade Hall the strength of the orchestra should be increased to a hundred players. The Manchester public were quick and vociferous in their appreciation of the loyalty that has within it something of the creative spirit.

In December 1950 one of the greatest of all possible musical honours was conferred on Sir John—the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society for 'outstanding services to music'. At a concert at the Royal Albert Hall, packed by six thousand people, Dr. Vaughan Williams made the presentation of the coveted medal. Three of the composers represented in the programme were gold medallists—Delius, Sibelius, Vaughan Williams. The decoration was founded in 1870 to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Beethoven, and among the names of the other musicians on whom the distinction has been bestowed are Brahms, Casals, Toscanini, Elgar, Walton, Dame Myra Hess, Beecham, Boult, Bruno Walter. Barbiroli was the fifty-second recipient among the select and distinguished company. After the performance of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony, the veteran composer, the G.O.M. of British music, came to the platform to make the presentation. In his speech he said:

'An ancient prophet once told us of a valley of dry bones, and these dry bones at a magic touch sprang to life and rose up and became an exceeding great army. Tonight we are here to do honour to one of those wizards who can take the dry bones of crotchets and quavers and breathe into them the breath of life. Now what is the secret of Barbirolli's power? Wagner used to say that it was the business of the conductor to find out where the melody lay, and I think part of Sir John's magic lies in the fact that he could always spot the melody—however unpromising sometimes. Barbirolli, like another great conductor, started life as a violoncellist—to my mind the most melodic of all instruments—and I believe that like his great colleague his motto would always be, "*Cantare, cantare*".

'Now every artist has his own special instrument. The conductor plays on his orchestra and I know that Sir John would be the first to admit that without this magnificent instrument to play on much of his magic would be powerless. And I know that the Hallé Orchestra, for their part, realize that, proven metal though they all are, they would not be able to ring true unless fashioned and moulded by their conductor. So together they form a great and mighty army, and together they march to victory. Sir John, it is my privilege and pleasure on behalf of the committee to hand to you the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society.'

Sir John Barbirolli, in his reply, said:

'Some little time ago it was my privilege to be present in the Manchester Town Hall when Mr. Winston Churchill received the freedom of the city, and he said in one of his first sentences, "There are some things that a man should not hear till he is dead". And I feel I rather qualify for that. Then he went on to wipe away a none too furtive tear, and I feel I could do that too, for my heart is very full. But there my emulation of this great man stops, because he went on to give a most magnificent oration with which, I am afraid, under the stress of the emotions that I feel tonight—if not for other reasons—I cannot compete.

'Dr. Vaughan Williams, if such a thing were possible, I feel that the great honour that has been conferred on me tonight has been intensified by the pride and pleasure I feel in receiving it from your hands. I hope that by our performance of your symphony, whatever its shortcomings, you have felt something of the gratitude, and, may I say, the affection we have for you and for all you have done to enrich our lives by the study and performance of your music.

'And not only have you enriched the lives of conductors and orchestras, but of musical communities the world over, as I can say with a certain amount of truth, for I have conducted this symphony in various parts of the world, and parts of the world where perhaps its tragic quietness could not be so well understood. But it is a wonderful thing that wherever I have played this work the greatness of it has been apparent immediately, and due honour has been paid to its inspiration.

'Now what can I say of the Royal Philharmonic Society? In its one hundred and thirty-seven years of existence, it has enshrined many historic and moving events of our musical life. Indeed, some memories are bound to fill us with awe, because one of its finest moments was when it put out the hand of warm friendship to the mighty Beethoven in his hour of distress. And it is a wonderful thing to know that such a great and noble society exists in our midst in this time. It is something we should nurture and treasure more than ever before in this difficult and shifting world of ours that we have this great society that has existed for so long, that has meant so much to us. If I may be permitted a comparison that is, perhaps, not out of place, I feel a lot more confidence in this rather unstable world, as they must have felt at Lord's when they saw W. G. Grace about.

'Now I am sure no greater honour will ever come to me than is being given to me by this great society tonight, except, perhaps, the honour that I hope may be mine for many years to come, of continuing to serve this society with the Hallé at my side, or in front of me.

'I say this because, as perhaps you know, we are somewhat

bound up together, and if I may be permitted a purely personal note for a moment, it is a particular happiness for me to receive this distinction standing in their midst. I have still some strenuous work to do, and you some strenuous listening to do, so will you forgive me if I try to express my gratitude to Dr. Vaughan Williams and the Society by just repeating the words of Sachs in the last act of the *Meistersinger*:

“Words, light to you, bow me to earth
Your praise is far beyond my worth”.

When in 1951 Sir John and Lady Barbirolli were in Australia, where he had a schedule of nine weeks' concerts, he had made it a condition of his visit that it should coincide with the England-Australia Test Matches, although his work prevented him from seeing more than six hours of them. He was asked by the *News Chronicle* to give impressions of the Sydney Test, which he did, through the paper's cricket correspondent, Crawford White. He had never before been to Sydney's famous ground, with its 52,000 spectators. Asked if he had ever performed before so large a crowd, he said that his nearest approach was in the Hollywood Bowl amphitheatre. A friend sitting next to him at the match chipped in with a comment that there would be an even greater and more impressive treat for him before the end of his tour when he would be conducting a concert, also in the open air, at Como Park, Melbourne, which had accommodation for 100,000! It was with great reluctance that he tore himself away from the game; Lady Barbirolli saw to it that he got ready for his evening concert, for the Sydney heat demanded in a conductor a degree of fitness comparable with that required to put in a hard day in the cricket field. 'I wish,' added Sir John as he went, 'that I could reduce my musical conscience to zero and see the day out . . .!'

In May 1951 there were rumours that Sir John might be going to the Covent Garden Opera House as musical director in succession to Dr. Karl Rankl. Barbirolli's brilliant operatic flair and his past experience in the theatre pit made him an obvious candidate in the eyes of the Covent Garden Opera Trust. He was,

anyway, a guest conductor in the 1951-2 season, and to opera audiences in London who have heard his performances of *Aïda* and *Turandot* at the Garden, his genius in that sphere was obvious. But the pull of the Hallé was again too strong for him to go permanently. All speculations about his future, for at least four years, were ended by the announcement in October 1954 that he would remain with the Hallé at least until the end of the Centenary Season we are now celebrating. There was, however, Sir John's insistent proviso that the Hallé 'remains of international standing'. It was not only the B.B.C. and Covent Garden that had endeavoured to secure his services; he had had offers from leading European and American orchestras also. Whatever dissatisfaction he had felt about adequate financial aid for the Hallé from the Manchester Corporation and the Arts Council—matters which will be discussed in a later section of this book—he felt a profound gratification at the unfailing support of his public in Manchester and Sheffield, and indeed in all the centres throughout the country regularly visited by the Hallé. Festival honours are important. Cheltenham has already been mentioned, and the acclaim won at the Edinburgh International Festivals must not be forgotten. Comparison with visiting European and American orchestras redounded to the credit of the Hallé and the patterns of critical appreciation took a now familiar form. But an orchestra lives—musically and spiritually at any rate—on the week by week, season by season, fair- and foul-weather patronage of those to whom music is a necessity; on the solid, unvarying backing of full and eager audiences. Against all the understandable importuning from elsewhere, it is this that has kept Sir John Barbirolli on the rostrum of the Hallé Orchestra.

In August 1956 Sir John underwent an operation at the Manchester Royal Infirmary for the removal of an intestinal obstruction, and all his engagements for September, October and most of November had to be cancelled. Happily, he made a steady recovery, and after a short rest at his home in September was able to go to Italy to continue his convalescence and to conduct concerts there at Genoa and Naples at the end of November, an

engagement booked twelve months previously. His illness brought much disappointment to London as well as to the North, for he was unable to conduct the Hallé at its week's concerts at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, which had become a tremendously popular feature of this unique institution. Guest conductors—George Weldon, Basil Cameron and Vilem Tausky—took charge of the Hallé instead. Sir John was greatly missed by the Promenade audiences who had taken him and the orchestra to their hearts ever since the first invasion into the Proms of 'your country cousins' (as he had genially described himself and his players). As an old 'Prommer'—of long standing!—and at the time the B.B.C.'s Music Publicity Officer, I knew at first hand the sense of personal and musical deprivation that possessed us all, and the concerned good wishes which went out to him for a speedy and complete recovery.

During his convalescence—and in hospital, even before—he spent much time studying his scores and preparing for his forthcoming activities. His enforced rest enabled him to achieve one of his great ambitions—the serious and exhaustive study of Bach's mighty *St. Matthew Passion*. He said, making no promises, that perhaps he would be ready to give a complete performance of the work in 1959. 'My ideal would be to give the first part on Holy Thursday evening and the second on Good Friday afternoon.' That performance I, for one, am determined not to miss. Sir John and Lady Barbirolli came back to Manchester from his Italian convalescence in the Veneti area, from which his family came, in time for the annual performance in Sheffield and Manchester of *Messiah* (to which reference has already been made in the Introduction). On this occasion I saw for myself some of the evidence in the score of Sir John's study of the *St. Matthew Passion* and listened, absorbed, to his illuminating, constructive comments on that masterpiece.

The Art of Conducting

By John Barbirolli

Go to the fountain-head' is always good advice, whether you are concerned with conducting, navigating a ship, or taking teeth out. In 1947, in the second volume of *The Penguin Music Magazine*, Barbirolli wrote an article on 'The Art of Conducting'. What could be more illuminating than to have the views of the man himself explaining to us at first hand the inner secrets of his compelling work? Here then is the article in full.

★ ★ ★

The history of conducting can be traced back at least to the fifteenth century, by which time it seems it had become customary to beat time at the performances of the 'Sistine Choir' in Rome with a roll of paper called a 'Sol-Fa'. In the next century, about 1516, we find writings describing performances of concerted vocal music at which these writings refer to 'a certain motion made by the hand of the chief singer according to the nature of the marks, which motion directs a song according to measure'. This rather tends to show that by the beginning of the sixteenth century the practice was universal: as does also a passage from Galilei's *Dialogo* (1583), where he mentions that the ancient Greeks did not beat time 'as is customary now'.

However, with the decline of polyphonic music and its attendant rhythmic subtleties, the time-beater must have become less necessary, and as the idea of the conductor as an interpreter as well as a time-keeper was not yet born, the practice of directing music with the conducting stick seems to have fallen into disuse.

How and when the change came about I am not certain, but by 1740 or so it was customary to direct opera performances sitting at the harpsichord, at least in Italy and Germany, and we have also, of course, descriptions of Bach to prove that he, in any case, was in the habit of directing the music while he himself played the organ. In France, though, the practice of using the stick seems to have continued, for someone writing in England in 1709 has rather an amusing account of the art as he saw it practised in Paris and apparently copied with assiduous indiscrimination in London. I don't think I can do better than quote the passage as it stands:

'The Master of Musick in the Opera at Paris had an Elboe Chair and Desk placed on the Stage where, with the Score in one hand and a stick in the other, he beat time on a table put there for that purpose, so loud, that he made a greater Noise than the whole Band, on purpose to be heard by the Performer. By degrees they removed this Abuse [not the most polite way of referring to practitioners of my craft] from the Stage to the Musick Room [which must mean what we now term the orchestra pit], where the Composer beats the time in the same manner and as loud as ever, but since the Italian Masters [this must refer to the Italian Opera composers who enjoyed great popularity in the town at that time] have come among us, they have put a stop to that ridiculous custom, because the Eye was too much distracted, being obliged to mind the beating of the measure and the score at the same time: besides, [and this will please some of my friends who sing in opera, if not my colleagues who conduct it] it kept the singer in too much subjection, and Fear of Errors.'

To make some singers fear errors is something of an achievement; unless they happen to be singing the wrong opera, they seem blissfully unaware of them.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the practice of beating time seems to have become firmly established in Germany, though it was not until 1820 that conducting with a

stick at orchestral concerts was tried and became an institution in London, where it was introduced by Spohr at a Royal Philharmonic Society concert. At the rehearsal this daring innovation (until then the orchestra was guided by the joint efforts of the principal violin or leader, and a gentleman at the harpsichord who came to the rescue with a few chords if things got a bit shaky) was received, as I suppose all innovations are fated to be, with the most profound distrust by the directors. But in Spohr's own words: 'The triumph of the baton was complete.'

Spohr's account of this historic occasion is very interesting:

'I took my stand in front of the orchestra, drew my directing-baton from my coat pocket, and gave the signal to begin. Quite alarmed at such a novel proceeding, some of the directors protested against it, but the triumph of the baton as a time-giver was decisive, and no one was seen any more seated at the piano during the performance of Symphonies and Overtures.'

The most famous practitioner of the art of conducting at this period was probably Mendelssohn, who presided over the Gewandhaus Concerts in Leipzig from 1835 to 1843. As prime inspirer and founder of the modern school of conducting, I think we can safely point to Wagner, and a survey of his chief disciples, such as Bülow, Richter, Levi and Mottl, quickly brings us to our own times.

Now I should like to say a little about the practical application of the conductor's art as a means of making orchestral or concerted music more easily intelligible by clarity and eloquence of presentation. This practical application of the art I divide into two sections: (1) the physical, with which I incorporate the psychological, and (2) the purely musical mathematics of the art. The possession of gifts of the former I regard as essential to the fulfilment of the other; for have we not often had the spectacle of a great musician unable to secure even a mediocre interpretation of a work of his own.

Wagner laid it down that the two fundamental principles underlying the art were: (1) giving the true tempo to the orchestra;



Left LAURANCE TURNER
Below SIR JOHN BARBIROLI
REHEARSING THE ORCHESTRA



Right

THE FREE TRADE HALL

Below

SIR JOHN BARBIROLI
WATCHING WORK ON
THE RUINS OF THE OLD
FREE TRADE HALL



(2) finding the 'melos', by which he means the unifying thread of line that gives a work its form and shape. Given these two qualities, of course, we have the conductor *in excelsis*, and most of our lives must be spent in trying to obtain these qualities, more especially the first. It is surprising how few conductors are capable of setting and maintaining a tempo for more than a few bars.

Having stressed the importance of tempo to this extent, I have sometimes advised students as a guiding principle that *no tempo should be so slow as to make it difficult for a melody to be recognizable, and no tempo so fast as to make a melody unrecognizable*, and that the composers' metronome marks, though sometimes inaccurate, are guides which it would be dangerous to ignore. This is not to suggest that accuracy alone can make a performance: accuracy without imagination is useless, and some small, subtle, barely perceptible modifications of tempo will ever be necessary to a living rendering of any music. From the foregoing it will be realized that the possession and understanding of these fundamental principles laid down by Wagner can only be claimed by very sensitive musical minds endowed with the will, energy and patience to probe them to the full in the interests of their art.

Now I would say a word on the physical-psychological aspect of conducting, which is so important because, however splendid a conductor's musical ideas may be, they will be nullified if these qualities are not present.

When I speak of the physical aspect I mean a natural gift of gesture which should be at once clear and eloquent, and in the term 'gesture' is included the beat. I do not personally believe in any standardization in this respect, but I would always ask that every gesture should have a definite meaning, and only be inspired by the most complete sincerity towards the music, oneself and the public.

By psychological aspect I mean the early divination of the types of players with whom you have to deal and your power of making them do their 100 per cent. best for you and the music.

This brings us to a very delicate and important problem—the latitude one can allow to players regarding expression in the

rendering of their solos. No hard-and-fast rules can be laid down here, as some players need more guidance than others, and the conductor must be quick to realize these points. It is dangerous to worry a very sensitive player too much; on the contrary, during an important and difficult solo the conductor should provide him with a background of sympathy, trust and help. I have sometimes been approached to explain various interpretations of the same piece due supposedly to 'moods' of mine. But the explanation is not concerned with moods. This freedom, however, must not extend so as to permit any anachronisms in phrasing, and no 'selfish' player, however good, should ever be tolerated in any first-class orchestra.

I think it could hardly be called a digression from my subject if I said something about the general duties and problems of conducting, which more or less bring us up to the immediate present. Few people seem to realize that conducting at the performance is the least important part of the business of conducting. I am not even referring to the continual rehearsals during the season, but to all the work of annotating parts, editing, the one hundred and one points of technical elucidation of scores which has to go on unceasingly.

Of course, one of the most formidable tasks that face the conductor of an organization such as the Hallé, for instance, is to make programmes—programmes that must have as a basis the great classical masterpieces, what we might call a representative selection of modern classics, and such contemporary music as might interest the public to hear—not forgetting the encouragement which it is our duty to extend to young and perhaps unknown composers. I myself have sometimes spent weeks reading scores, of which more than 90 per cent must finally be rejected, not because they are all unworthy of performance, but because I do not believe that the Hallé Concerts should become merely an experimental forum. When the programme material is all gathered together, I must try to obviate too many repetitions of items played during previous seasons, and, to ensure the retention of some degree of sanity to myself, must not attempt to please

everybody. It is easy, by the way, to assemble four great pieces of music and produce a badly balanced programme. Also, in a well-balanced programme the substitution of one piece can completely ruin it. I can say without any exaggeration that it has taken me months to compile programmes for one season, and obviously with the compilation of these programmes there must be constant study. I personally find that after weeks spent in research and study the actual period of conducting comes as a kind of blessed release: musical thoughts that have been singing inside one's mind for months can be expressed at last.

Some questions which I am often asked, and which I might take the opportunity of dealing with here, concern the seating of the orchestra, the most suitable type of baton, accompaniment of soloists, and whether it is best to conduct with or without a score. These things are so personal that I can only state my own methods. First, the question of seating. The main bone of contention is that of the disposition of the strings. It has become usual of late years, both here and abroad, to mass the deeper-toned strings on the outside of the orchestra to the right of the conductor in the traditional place allotted the second violins. Sometimes the violas are placed immediately on the right of the conductor or sometimes even the 'cellos, and the first and second violins are massed together on the conductor's left. This perhaps creates an extra brilliancy of violin tone, while the proximity of the lower strings to the outside of the orchestra makes for a deep and dark sonority.

This method, however, has its drawbacks. The main one, I think, is that it tends to a preponderance of the brass parts. An even more vital one—especially in the performance of the older classical works where there is so often fugal and melodic interplay between the first and second violins—is that when they are massed together it is not so easy to distinguish between the two parts. It is difficult to deny the fact that this 'visual' interplay which takes place aids the 'aural' interplay when each section is placed on either side of the conductor. Obviously, as I have said, there can be no hard-and-fast rule laid down, and the conductor in the end seats his

orchestra in the way in which he himself feels most comfortable and will satisfy his musical consciousness, which must always be his guide.

On the subject of batons, here again the choice is a personal one; but perhaps a much more important, sensitive and delicate choice than is commonly imagined. It is a rather curious fact, which I have noted almost subconsciously, that some conductors change types of batons in different stages of their musical development. In my own case the batons that I find have suited me best have changed during what might be called the brilliant and showy period of my youth and the more sedate and sober period to which I am rapidly approaching. Apart from personal consideration, here as in everything, good taste and good sense should determine. It is as absurd to use a baton which resembles a diminutive lead pencil as it is to wave a weapon of exceeding length and frailty.

I have always taken pleasure in the compliments paid me by artists for my so-called accompaniments. I have used the word 'so-called' advisedly, because with the majority of the great concertos, such as those of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, etc., to call the orchestra and conductor the 'accompaniment' is about as accurate as referring to the piano parts of the Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms Violin Sonatas as 'accompaniments'. Such success as may have attended my labours in this sphere is because I treat a concerto not as a virtuosic display by one individual, but as a collective musical accomplishment, and I spare no pains to that end. It must not be forgotten that the performance of the great concertos provided during a season is not merely a question of presenting soloists, but it is a part of a definite plan to put before the public as many of the symphonic masterpieces as possible. We must not forget that the great concertos should always be a considered part of the orchestral repertoire.

A still more controversial topic is the use or non-use of scores. I would immediately like to say that it is foolish to imagine that a man knows less about a work because he uses a score. On the other hand, it is just as foolish to accuse all those who dispose of

them of being bluffers and charlatans. The prime duty of any conductor is to secure the best possible performance of any work with which he is entrusted, and to use such means as he conscientiously believes will ensure the best possible results. To some conductors a score may be an impediment, to others, even though they refer to it very seldom, it is a release from any anxiety which enables them to give a much freer vent to their imagination. At the outset of my career I did a considerable amount of conducting from memory, but I placed on myself the extremely arduous demand that what I conducted from memory I should also be able to write down from memory. As I could not continue to discharge faithfully this onerous conscientiousness, I reverted to scores. On the last occasion when I conducted *Die Meistersinger* some years ago in London, I amused myself by conducting the dress rehearsal without a score, but for the performance I decided it was more sensible and more respectful to the members of the company to have the music before me.

There is one last point I should like to make. I would venture the assumption, without any qualification whatever, that a conductor is born and not made. By this I am not referring to a musical quality, but rather to a purely technical capacity; and I also do not mean that a born conductor cannot find room for improvement. Some of the most involved technical problems are to be found in the opera house. I would advise any young man with the opportunity for doing so to graduate from the opera house, and it is an indisputable fact that some of the greatest conductors have come from there—Richter, Levi, Mottl, Weingartner, Nikisch, Toscanini and Beecham. For there the conductor is faced with sudden and curious emergencies of all kinds. He cannot always proceed according to plan, not only because of the performances of the singers, but also because of elements of an even more unnerving disposition. The number of little things that can happen for which the conductor is technically responsible are, I am sure, not realized by the audience. For instance, a character has to rush in and sing something and the door sticks—a little delay ensues, and yet all must be made to seem as if everything is

proceeding smoothly. With choruses singing off-stage, calculations of distance and sound are necessary that make the conductor's task more complicated, yet all must sound entirely unified in the front of the house. Experience of these things combines to equip an artist and make him a master of his craft.

Before I conclude, I would like to say to any young musician who contemplates this most arduous and responsible of careers, make your watchwords 'integrity and sincerity to yourself, and loyalty to the man whose music you are seeking to interpret'. Never think, 'What can I make of this piece?' but try to discover what the composer meant to say. We must bear in mind that the conductor has become, for good or ill, one of the most important and responsible personalities in the musical world, and by fine stylistic performances can do much towards a purification of musical perception amongst the general public. On the other hand, performances that are merely the vehicle for indulging the vanity of a personality, however gifted, can only tend to lead us farther from that which should be the goal of all true musicians: service to that great art which it is our privilege to practise.

Some Personal Impressions

Friendship with John Barbirolli is perpetually rewarding. It is a relationship that grows, fructified by care, by kindness, by understanding, and by the unfailing stimulation of a full mind, ranging over a wide and diversified area of human and intellectual interests. And always the human first. I had heard him conduct opera in London long before I met him nearly on the eve of his departure for New York to succeed Toscanini. From the orchestra pit he had given to me an impression of bursting vitality. His conducting gestures—more vehement then than now—sent the dark hair on the back of his head jumping up and down. And that is really all I remember now of that particular evening. As a journalist I was constantly seeing his name in the papers. Friends of mine who knew him, some of whom had sung under him, talked about him with enthusiasm. He was lucky, I thought, in his name. It looked, and certainly sounded, arresting; it sounded as if it naturally belonged to the world of the concert hall and the opera house, and especially to the rostrums of that world, a slender white stick tapping on the rail before the opening chord, the suggestion of authority and power—authority and power immediately acknowledged. A name like Hughes, say, would not have seemed right at all, with no syllabic sonority or finality. But perhaps all this is only because I knew, anyway, that he was a conductor. . . .

It is odd too, that although he is unusually short in stature you do not even notice it. Some of my friends who have seen him only on the rostrum have thought him to be tallish. I do not suppose that any man directing an inspired performance of Verdi's *Requiem* or Brahms's Fourth Symphony can really look short. It is a question, too, of physical proportions. His are so right. You notice the

neatness, the trimness, the clean-cut, concentrated, completely contained nervous energy. There are no loose, frayed ends. I was privileged on more than one occasion to meet another man of short stature who made a similar impression on me—David Lloyd George: another full, immaculately tidy packet of pulsating vitality.

Barbiroli, in stance and step, suggests command. You automatically put him on the bridge, not in the engine-room. I know that almost everybody who has written about him in the physical sense has used, in this or that context, the term 'Napoleonic'. It is perfectly understandable. He can certainly look 'Napoleonic' when, with upraised baton in his hand, he turns sharply on his platform, and waits, gazing unwinkingly at some late-comer clumping to his seat in the middle of a row, as always. Sir John's constitution, too, must have some resemblance to that of the great conqueror. You cannot conduct over two hundred concerts a year—not forgetting the rehearsals, the travelling, the hotel botherations—without it. You cannot emerge from a flat above a baker's shop in Southampton Row, London, and become a conqueror in the musical world of two hemispheres without it.

Listen to Sir John talking, especially when he is deeply moved. The dark, vivid eyes flash, there are overtones above the normal rumble of the voice—a voice with a warm dryness—the eloquent hands, the strong thumbs bent back, all help to pictorialize the subject and the situation. At eleven o'clock at night he will say, 'Listen', jabbing your arm with a forefinger as arresting as the eye of the Ancient Mariner, 'for twenty years . . .'. And the next thing you realize is that it is 3.30 a.m. and he thinks it's time you were in bed. Next morning, still cheerfully sleepy, you come down to breakfast. No sign of Sir John. Breakfast is not a convention to which he subscribes. He has long since gone to his rehearsal. Eventually you, the sluggard, get there too, and find him pouring himself out in a white-hot revivification of Sibelius's Second Symphony. And you sit down—just tired. But energy has to be conserved as well as spent, and I think that one of the ways in which Sir John does not *waste* energy is by never getting entangled

in 'social engagements'. A book means much more to him than a *salon*; a quiet evening in his flat with his charming wife; a talk with friends about cricket or the law or politics or medicine—with the 'human angle' again uppermost; a foray into the kitchen, rather a holy of holies to him, to prepare one of his 'specials' whilst you rummage through his books, smoke his cigarettes, and drink the *aperitif* which, with expertise, he has arranged for you. The time for eating is when the day is done, after which the world is brought into the middle of the room where the curling smoke of cigarette and pipe and good cigar floats gently upwards, to be submitted to searching interrogation and controversial comment. There is a notable consistency about the agenda: people and things; what makes them tick; the fascination of idiosyncrasy; the fly in the ointment and the flaw in the steel; and, best of all, the exploration of the virtue and greatness in others.

John Barbirolli is a born hero-worshipper. He remains, in the midst of fame and honours, the eager youngster, looking up. Hear him on Churchill, Kathleen Ferrier, Henry Wood, some of the 'characters' in the Hallé, his father and grandfather, a great contemporary judge or surgeon—he moves as a familiar and welcome guest in those spheres—or a comic figure met in the street, a ship, or at Lord's. And then he will take out from an inconspicuous cupboard something that you think must have been banished there for misbehaviour, out of sight, deliberately forgotten, only grudgingly admitted as a low-grade necessity in the orbit of civilization. Yes, the telephone—further hidden by a kind of constantly threatening hangman's hood. But the unpredictable, ill-timing disturber of the peace can claim one powerfully extenuating circumstance—it enables him to make his nightly call to his beloved mother in Streatham. When the call is made and the fond 'good-nights' have been exchanged, the telephone is put back into its condemned cell, and in the closed uninterrupted circuit of warmed and enveloping friendship the stimulating assize of the cosmos is resumed. . . .

I wrote earlier that familiar places, sights and sounds mean much to Barbirolli. He loves the country as he loves his London. He

talks and walks about the Sussex Downs as if they belonged to him, and indeed, in a sense, they do. Just beyond Seaford I have walked with him on a lovely English summer morning, the warm sun upon the grass, the undulating lines of hill and valley a stave of a pastoral symphony as meaningful to him in its way as Beethoven. He will stop suddenly, grip your arm, point to the shimmering green distance and, listening to the slumbrous peace that is like a benediction on the landscape, will ask you, knowing the answer, 'What do you want more beautiful than that?' There is time to breathe it in, to 'stand and stare', for a walk with him is accomplished by means of a series of suddenly enforced stops to give the gathering flow of his conversation—on many subjects—time to absorb the beauty of the scene. He shares Hilaire Belloc's love for Sussex, and if and when he retires from the concert hall and the opera house I can imagine him taking possession of the Downs in the spirit of a man going home knowing that there he will be encompassed by a deep and satisfying tranquillity.

We drop from the Downs towards a little village pub that seems to be so much more private than any cottage that you could easily pass it by, unaware that it was there to welcome you. In the low-ceilinged bar, with its wooden benches, we would sit among the few Sussex villagers to drink our pints of beer. Sir John, hands resting on his stick, looking cool in his white alpaca jacket, a white peaked cap like a tennis cap, with ventilation holes, on his head, listened to the conversation of the pleasant, earthy 'locals' with a friendly, amused smile on his face. He became part of the scenery with the rest, missing no quirk of phrase or accent and quickly making sure that we who were with him missed nothing either. He entered into general chatter as naturally and easily as if he spent much of his day doing just that. He relished jokes and badinage, chuckling contentedly. None of the habitués, of course, had a clue to his identity; when to his care-free attire sun-glasses were added it would be difficult for some of his friends immediately to identify him! He used to visit this friendly tavern whenever he came to Seaford to relax, but the man behind the bar and his wife who ran the little place had no inkling about their distinguished

annual guest until one morning, idly turning over a newspaper on the counter, the husband let out an excited shout for his wife. He pointed to a photograph in the paper, a photograph of the man who had chatted with them and with the customers in the bar in so genial and unassuming a manner. And the caption under the photograph said 'Sir John Barbirolli'. Early in 1957 in the B.B.C. television programme 'This is your Life', in which Sir John was the surprised and unannounced victim, one of the people whom he met, again completely unexpectedly to him, was 'mine host' from the pub nestling in the Sussex Downs.

I do not know of a more euppeptic occasion than a meal with the Barbirolli family after the pastoral pilgrimage of the morning, in a charming house almost within a stone's throw of the sea. Family life means much to the Barbirollis. I have deeply enjoyed sitting at the long table in the midst of them. At one end Sir John presides with an eagle eye on his guests lest their piled-up plates get empty; in this respect you do as he says, not as he does. He is toying with a biscuit and a piece of cheese, sipping his wine and seeing that the bottle does not indulge in long sit-down strikes. At the other end there is his twinkling mother whose dark hair is a constant, successful challenge to the calendar's ridiculous story of eighty years plus. Lady Barbirolli, endeared to all by her natural grace and charm, her wit and laughter, also see that you enjoy your food (there is no conceivable alternative!). Cricket on the lawn, in which brother, sister, niece, guests join in, is an imperative item on the agenda. Anybody who, like myself, is no Hutton or Laker can jolly well look after the score card. This whole 'adventure in friendship' is so refreshing; everybody feels at home and seems to 'belong'. A cynic might be tempted to ask what all this has to do with the training and conducting of an orchestra. Risking the cynic's raised eyebrows and worldly unwisdom, I would say 'quite a lot', when the training is Barbirollian in character. He never forgets that his orchestra is an assemblage of human beings, not a collection of instrumental units. His players in New York used to say that he showed genuine interest in their personal joys and worries, in the health of their wives and children.

It is the same here at home. This projection of the family atmosphere into the rehearsal room not only does not militate against discipline but positively reinforces it. And, as has been unmistakably indicated, Barbirolli is a disciplinarian of the first order.

His rehearsals are revelatory. No time is wasted in talk. I have heard even so eminent and experienced a conductor as Wilhelm Mengelberg talk an orchestra into distraction for long minutes on end until the string players were almost too tired and bored to lift their bows when at last there was an opportunity to resume playing before the next rat-tat-tat on the rostrum rail brought another stop and a fresh flood of comminatory oratory. Barbirolli, saying nothing, will cease to wave his stick, look sadly at the orchestra—and how eloquent that look is!—and then resume. They know what is wrong; next time it goes right. Now and then there is a sharp, effective reprimand. ‘I won’t go on conducting a lot of stuffed shirts,’ I once heard him exclaim hotly to a famous orchestra. He told a chorus during a rehearsal of *The Dream of Gerontius* at the phrase ‘Go forth . . .’ ‘Go forth!’ he groaned. ‘You sound more like a lot of corporation dustmen going forth. . . .’ Like him, they all have to be keyed-up. Yet in all this there is no suggestion that the man on the rostrum is an aloof impersonal musical *führer*. He is a part of, not apart from, the orchestra. ‘One of us’ is a phrase I have often heard them use about him. He will go with them, afterwards, into a pub where ‘drinks are on me’. He will travel with them in their coaches; he has slept among them on palliasses on the deck of a steamer *en route* for the Continent. You need to be a big man to mix in this manner with those who are under your direction without the slightest loss of authority and respect. Insulation from life and people is no part of his make-up.

There was one occasion during a tour with the Hallé in the west of England when Sir John wanted to let off steam at rehearsal in one centre about the unsatisfactory playing of the orchestra at another town on the previous evening. To the rehearsal had come some of the most prominent civic dignitaries. As he came to the

platform he saw them sitting expectantly in the circle of the hall. He asked who they were and was told, in somewhat hushed tones, that they were the city's V.I.P.'s. 'They'll have to clear out,' he ordered, abruptly. 'I will not reprimand the orchestra in front of anybody.' Out they went, and the players received an exemplary drubbing without the presence of any official, or unofficial, auditors. That is the 'dictatorship' of a man with a profound respect for his colleagues. One does not need to be a psychologist to realize the effect of such an attitude on the part of the chief on the men and women under his command. That is partly why one discerns the difference—or some of the difference—between performances of the Hallé under Barbirolli and under visiting conductors; and it is more than can be accounted for by the mere fact that in the one case the conductor is the permanent conductor and in the others not. The regularity of the conductor's contact with the orchestra is not necessarily the decisive factor. There are orchestras that play well, on a competent level for their own conductor, but frequently play better for a visiting conductor, no matter how brief and occasional his association with the instrumentalists. The platitudinous observation may be forgiven if only for the reason that its implications are often forgotten—and misunderstood.

A conductor's style is, of course, an expression of the man and of the musician. He cannot keep 'himself' off the end of his stick any more than a composer can fail to leave his fingerprints on his music. H. L. Mencken once wrote that you had only to hear a few notes of Brahms to know that you were listening to the music of a giant. Some conductors, like Victor de Sabata, appear to wrestle physically, almost violently, with the music, and you would hardly be surprised if they hurled themselves into the brass department at a climax in a burst of interpretative frenzy. That is one way. It is ridiculous to say, as has been said, that it is 'nonsense', 'unnecessary', 'mere exhibitionism'. By distracting the eye it may well diminish the concentration of the ear, but it need be no less sincere and natural than Weingartner's reduction of gesture to the point of an almost invisible economy, or Richard Strauss's

evocation of *Ein Heldenleben* with baton movements that would be regarded as too effacing in the shyest conductor of a school choir. Barbirolli's stick has grace as well as power. Each gesture has its deliberate purpose, and if, as he himself has remarked, his style has 'mellowed' today by comparison with its characteristics in his 'youthful and brilliant' period, that is because conductors, like writers and orators, learn as they develop to 'consume their own smoke'. Nor is it only the stick. With some, it appears to have little connection with the man behind it. Something tacked on to his arm. Barbirolli's is an extension and pin-pointing concentration of his personality. He conducts with the whole of himself. In the final pages of the Passacaglia of Brahms's Fourth Symphony, for example, he plunges into the music to exhibit to the fullest its climactic intensity and, seemingly overwhelmed himself, overwhelms you in his exposition of its majestic grandeur and power. At the end of one of his many outstanding performances of this great work he gave me the impression of leaving the platform a consumed being.

Then, again, note the poised delicacy, beauty and refinement with which he invests Mozart and Schubert; the heart-tightening, tragic passion of the *Liebestod*; the spontaneous and infectious gaiety, a gaiety that dances on air, with which he presents his programmes of Viennese music; and the truly creative understanding he brings to the massive, granitic tonal structures of Sibelius. Here I cannot refrain from quoting what Mr. Ernest Newman, the distinguished critic of the *Sunday Times*, wrote of the performance by Barbirolli and the Hallé of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony, at the Edinburgh Festival, in 1948:

'Of the Sibelius I do not hope ever to hear a more splendidly convincing performance. It was an inexpressible pleasure to see, for once, a great work gradually taking shape in performance as it must have done in the mind of its creator, developing steadily, logically, from acorn to mighty oak, and treated respectfully as something existing in its own right. . . .'

The Times critic wrote of the same work:

‘... The Orchestra gave the finest performance it has been my good fortune to hear. Everything was right—tempo, balance, expression. The nice adjustment of all these things is particularly difficult in this symphony. To take a particular point, the great climax, which is apt to become a roar of brazen noise, was built up with a marvellous sense of timing and, because every player was attacking his note cleanly and exactly, the texture was as limpid and as glowing with rich colour as it is possible to imagine.’

Barbirolli's absorbed enjoyment of music is communicated at once to his listeners. It is not just 'another concert' which some impresario has fixed because hall, orchestra and conductor were simultaneously available. There is beauty to unfold, drama to present, poetry to discourse. A Hallé occasion under him creates a sense of community. Time and again I have seen him come off the platform, physically almost limp but keyed up mentally and spiritually, and in the conductor's room a few minutes later he is more animated than any of us whose role has been that of listener. Sitting in the chair or walking up and down the room, he will be telling you 'what a great work that is', and 'didn't they play it, eh, didn't they play it?' Humble and distinguished folk, young and old, come to see him, to thank him. He is the same with all of them, smiling, friendly, easy, pleased. He has not a trace either of musical or social snobbery. He never affects the pose of the weary Titan. He has a boyish, unspoilt delight in genuine appreciation. Praise his achievement and you will get no hummings and hawings of false modesty. He will thank you, and go on to ask if you know the composer's third or sixth symphony (or whatever it may happen to be). I remember his coming up to me one evening at the close of a concert, just after he had returned from conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and saying with his eyes alight, 'Do you know, even in Berlin they think I can conduct Brahms?' In that simple, proud sentence he said even more about himself than about the Berliners.

The catholicity of Barbirolli's taste is another important and

rewarding facet of his gifts. He does not flog this or that school of composers, as even a cursory study of his programmes will show. He does not cultivate narrow specialisms. He explores the realm of music, not that of a few 'favourite' composers. Specialization can do much to exploit a conductor's ego, to make a personal name and fame. He is not interested in that kind of *réclame*, and he might well say that his favourite composer is the one whose work he has just played.

One has a pretty convinced notion of those whom he regards—past and present—as truly great. The Elgar centenary celebrations in the early part of 1957 made it plain to any who were not previously aware of it that he loved the music of that great Englishman, who was at one time a President of the Hallé Society. Not only the symphonies and oratorios but the chamber music too, for did he not with his 'cello join the Laurance Turner String Quartet to perform some of that chamber music in the Free Trade Hall during the celebrations? He reminded us in an eloquent article on Elgar in the *Daily Telegraph* on 1 June 1957 that it was the Second Symphony that launched him on his career as a symphonic conductor in 1927, when he was only twenty-eight. His devotion to the music of another great Englishman, Vaughan Williams, has shown us that the 'Cockney of Latin blood' (to use his own phrase) can penetrate to the heart of the music of these composers because—I quote Barbirolli again—'it has those elements of greatness which belong to us all'.

In his reading too—and I wonder how he manages to do it all and sleep!—he is always drawn to the 'elements of greatness' in men and occasions. Biography he devours whenever he has a chance, ranging from journalism and politics through law, medicine, cricket, to the memoirs of one of the 'big four' detectives like 'Fabian of the Yard'. And alongside the fullness and fascination of his talk must be put his complementary (and complimentary) capacity for listening. I would say there is a proviso here: that the listening must be worth while. Good stories and comic situations are never excluded. If you like people you enjoy hearing about their foibles. And Barbirolli has a pretty turn in the vernacular. He

is an untiring student of character. Men who have something of the peasant and the poet in their make-up come close to earth and reach to the stars. What is not always realized, I think, is that Barbirolli's directness and simplicity go along with a mind not only of quick suppleness but of artistic and intellectual subtlety. In company he has a sixth sense which, with the swiftness of a hawk, alights on the most trivial insincerity or is instantaneously repelled by any attempt at flattery, however casual and covert. Friendship must be mutually valuable and nourished with intelligence. I say gladly that his friendship, which I am proud to acknowledge, is a constant and progressive education in the art of personal relationships, and this is the kind of debt it is a joy always to increase.

Showing the Flag

Famed as the Hallé was in Britain and abroad, it had not travelled to the continent of Europe before Sir John Barbiroli took over the conductorship. Mention has been made in the course of this narrative of the projected visit of the orchestra to France under Sir Hamilton Harty, but nothing, unfortunately, came of it. But amends have been made in a brilliant and exciting way by a number of tours in which the Hallé flag has been shown to admiring and enthusiastic audiences in many parts of Europe. Instead of being a name—albeit a highly honoured name—in the minds of continental music-lovers, the Hallé Orchestra was materialized in the flesh for them, thus adding cubits to its musical stature and extending ‘a local habitation and a name’ into the forefront of the international artistic scene.

The first tour abroad was undertaken in 1944, and extended from 17 December to 7 January 1945, during which time seventeen concerts were given in Belgium, Holland and Northern France. It came about as the result of Barbiroli’s own experiences earlier in 1944 when he visited Italy to conduct concerts for the Allied troops. After a delay of two days caused by the not unaccustomed phenomenon of ‘fog in the Channel’, the orchestra began a fifteen-day tour of 700 miles, with concerts at Brussels, Ghent, Eindhoven and Lille. The audiences were composed of men straight from the front. At Eindhoven, twenty miles from the front line, so great was the demand to hear the Hallé that seven concerts had to be given there to a total of twenty thousand men. They particularly wanted works by Bach and Ravel and were insatiable for encores. Often, the seventy members of the orchestra were cold, tired and even hungry. Once they came under machine-gun fire. But neither discomfort nor danger could

militate against the success of this first 'invasion' of the Continent. The troops were enraptured and the players were moved and stimulated by their contact with men fighting to liberate Europe. In Ghent, the Hallé had the honour of being the first British orchestra to play in the city, as, indeed, they were the first symphony orchestra from Britain to play to the troops in battle areas.

The war was over when the orchestra made the second continental tour of its career. This was in 1948, when, between 28 May and 8 June, five concerts were given in Austria: Innsbruck, Salzburg, Graz and Vienna. The orchestra journeyed by air to Innsbruck for the first concert, the programme of which included the Second Suite from Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*, Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Then on to Salzburg for one concert in the beautiful Mozarteum—the headquarters for Mozart studies and the Mozart Society. Barbirolli's wife, Evelyn Rothwell, played the recently discovered Mozart Oboe Concerto. Clamorous ovations marked the occasion.

Wintry conditions had set in, and a most uncomfortable journey was made to Graz for the third concert, in the Stefanien-saal. On the following day the visitors travelled over the Semmering Pass under the watchful eyes of the Russians—and in a snowstorm—before reaching Vienna, the musical heart of Europe. Physical and, still more, nervous strain were inseparable from such an enterprise, but all anxiety was dispelled by the large and eager (and sophisticated) audience which crowded the Grosser Musikvereinsaal. Two concerts were given here, and the first programme included items by Purcell and Delius. The Symphony was Dvořák's Fourth, in which the wood-wind evoked the warmest eulogies from the press. At the second concert, on the following night, Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations received a notably enthusiastic reception. The Hallé had conquered, and in a city of lustrous musical traditions, before audiences of acute critical discrimination and enduring memories of supreme artistic achievements. Two days were devoted to sightseeing and rest, highlighted by a reception for the members of the orchestra which

was attended by the Austrian President. The tour had involved a journey of 350 miles by road from Innsbruck to Vienna.

Next year, 1949, it was the turn of Holland—an exchange visit with the Residentie Orchestra there. From 20 April to 25 April four concerts were scheduled, the first at The Hague. Before flying off, Sir John and Lady Barbirolli, with the Hallé players, were able to greet the visiting Dutch orchestra at Ringway (Manchester) Airport. The first concert, at The Hague, was attended by two thousand people, and was followed by a reception at the British Embassy. The second concert was at Leiden and the last two at The Hague again. Works by British composers were included in the programmes, among them Alan Rawsthorne's gay and piquant 'Street Corner' Overture and Sir John's own arrangement of an Elizabethan suite from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book for string orchestra and horns. The soloists on the tour were Hermann Krebbers and Ginette Neveu, who was to lose her life in an air crash, a disaster which tragically (and prematurely) robbed the world of a violinist of undoubted genius and saddened the hearts of all who had been privileged to hear her. The Holland trip, enjoyed by all, included visits to the fine Amsterdam museums and the bulb fields.

Later that year, on 1 and 2 August, the Hallé went to Knocke-le-Zoute, in Belgium, to give two concerts at the Festival there. It was the first time that a British orchestra had contributed to this event. Denis Matthews was the soloist in a Mozart Piano Concerto, and Sir John and the orchestra made a deep impression with their stirring performance of Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony.

The year 1950 saw the orchestra undertake its longest and most ambitious tour to date. From 6 November to 9 November it was in Portugal, and flew in all a distance of 2,000 miles, visiting four important centres in that fascinating country. Four concerts were given in Lisbon, one in Aveixa, one in Braga and three in Oporto. Unusual interest was displayed in the visit of the British orchestra; all the concerts were packed; and the critics and public were loud in their praise. The wide-ranging repertoire consisted of works by Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Roussel, Haydn, Debussy,

Ravel and Turina. Despite the onerous commitments, time was found for seeing the sights, and the recreational programme included a journey to the little fishing village of Nazare, which was recently honoured by a visit from Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip during their State Visit to Portugal.

But the biggest and most ambitious programme of all was planned for 1953 when Barbirolli took the Hallé to Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, for the Central African Rhodes Centenary Exhibition, to give fourteen concerts from 20 June to 5 July. Detailed planning for several months preceded this exciting event. The orchestra flew 5,000 miles to participate in the centenary of Cecil Rhodes's birth. By now the players must have begun to feel almost as much at home in the air as on the platform of the Free Trade Hall. Fourteen concerts in as many days made musical history in the Royal Theatre, Bulawayo, the bush city whose white population did not exceed thirty thousand. Many of them, on an analysis of the audiences, came to hear the Hallé more than once. A number travelled many miles from the surrounding country, and there were Africans in the theatre also. Five separate programmes included Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica*. I was told that there was more than musical significance in this fact as the Royal Theatre was extremely cold in the evenings! The soloists who came with the orchestra were Evelyn Rothwell (Lady Barbirolli), Beryl Kimber and Denis Matthews.

Visits were paid to native villages and game preserves. A pilgrimage was arranged to the simple but impressive grave of Rhodes. It will surprise no one—as it delighted all—that Sir John, a cricket enthusiast with expert knowledge and understanding, umpired a specially arranged cricket match. A brilliant climax was reached in the Gala Performance in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who, with Princess Margaret, was attending the Centenary Exhibition. The programme consisted entirely of British music: Eric Coates's march 'Rhodesia'; Vaughan Williams's 'Serenade to Music'; Constant Lambert's ballet *Horoscope*; Elizabethan Suite (arranged Barbirolli); and Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations.

For all the Hallé's travelling the orchestra had never visited the nearest continental capital—Paris. It was not until 25 October 1955 that Sir John Barbirolli was able to take his players to the City of Light. They gave one concert there at the famous Champs Élysées Theatre. An air-lift was arranged which gave the orchestra just time to get there, rehearse, perform and return home. The programme which the Parisian audience lapped up with joy consisted of Rossini's overture 'La Gazza Ladra'; Vaughan Williams's 'Fantasia on a Theme of Tallis'; Ravel's Second Suite from *Daphnis and Chloe*; and Brahms's Symphony No. 1. The praises of the French critics were superlative. For Sir John Barbirolli the visit was a personal triumph, probably even more so than on any of the other tours. He was hailed unequivocally as a great conductor and interpreter.

The effect of all this enterprising and exacting concert-giving in other parts of the world on the prestige of the Hallé Orchestra was unmistakable. The new, foreign audiences took conductor and players to their hearts. Accustomed as the audiences in many places were to top-class performances of great music, especially in the classical sphere, they, none the less, responded to the Hallé's playing and Sir John's interpretative mastery with alert understanding and deep satisfaction. Skill, sincerity, integrated service to the composer, individual excellence and ensemble virtuosity could not, and did not, fail to capture the imagination and fire enthusiasm. The Manchester Orchestra's unqualified artistic success brought honour not only to itself and its unrelaxing, indefatigable conductor, but to the city of Manchester, to Britain, and to the whole art of music-making itself.

Inter Alia

Early on in Barbirolli's régime, the Hallé Choir, which had been inactive since the outbreak of war, was also re-formed, with that fine and experienced choral trainer, Herbert Bardgett, as chorus master. He was also chorus master of the Huddersfield Choral Society, with which his name was intimately and brilliantly associated, and he had also long been associated with the Leeds Musical Festival.¹ The choir—and the Sheffield Philharmonic Choir—now play an important part in the Hallé's choral and orchestral concerts, which, in view of the magnificent singing tradition of the North, is as it should be. In December 1945, the re-established Hallé Choir, two hundred and fifty strong, gave its first concert. In the season 1945-6 the Hallé Orchestra gave fifty-five concerts in Manchester, a record up to then, and thirty-seven in Sheffield, more than ever before. The total number of concerts in the season, including those in all parts of the country, came to the staggering figure of two hundred and twenty-four. It is not surprising that this was regarded as representing too much work and that at this rate even so loyal, efficient and co-operative an orchestra as the Hallé would be 'burnt out'. And what of its conductor—even with his fabulous nervous energy? The ending in 1945 of the dispute between the Hallé and the B.B.C. on the agreement of the latter to pay £150 for each broadcast performance, previously refused, put the Hallé back on the air after two years.

In 1946 the Hallé Society, with the help of Sheffield and

¹ In 1956 a talented local musician and a brilliant organist, Eric Chadwick, was appointed to succeed Herbert Bardgett as chorus-master of the Hallé, when the latter retired from the position in which he had given such distinguished service.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HALLÉ

Bradford, approved a new constitution, which included the creation of a class of members guaranteeing to pay £10 in five yearly instalments of £2, or a lump sum of £9. Permanent members were still called on to guarantee £100. There was an increase in the number of £100 guarantors from eighty-eight to a hundred and eight. In 1946, also, the Society produced the first number of its attractive and popular magazine *Hallé*. In 1947 the Hallé Concerts Society formed the Hallé Club, which in the first month acquired two thousand members and has gone from strength to strength. Its social and musical activities—and it is responsible too for the publication of *Hallé*—are of the liveliest and most comprehensive character and it is powerfully dedicated, of course, to furthering the interests of the great orchestra.

In 1948 the Hallé Choir, now increased in numbers to three hundred and fifty, made its first gramophone record. This was John Ireland's well-known 'These Things Shall Be'. Barbirolli conducted the choir and the Hallé Orchestra. John Ireland, it may be remembered, was born in Bowden, Cheshire, the son of a well-known Manchester editor.

In 1952 the first of the successful series of Hallé Proms was inaugurated under the conductorship of George Weldon whose work as assistant to Sir John is deserving of the warmest praise. Over twenty-five thousand tickets were sold for the nine concerts in this inaugural season.

It is typical of the Hallé Orchestra that the loyalty and long service of its members should be tangibly marked by the award of a Twenty Years' Service Medal. Continuity, in a special sense, is the breath of life to an orchestra, not least an orchestra in which the spirit of family homogeneity is so strong. It is not unfitting to include in a centenary tribute the names of those serving with the orchestra in this memorable period in its history who are proud and happy to wear this imaginatively conceived musical distinction.

The list is as follows: Sydney Partington (*principal, second violins*); Sydney Errington (*principal, violas*); Sydney Wright (*'cellos*); Alexander Ferrier (*'cellos*); Arthur H. Shaw (*double bass*); Wallace

H. Jones (*double bass, tuba and orchestra manager*); Pat Ryan (*principal, clarinets*); W. Leonard Regan (*clarinets and bass clarinet*).

It is not difficult to imagine what memories of effort and achievement, of doubt, crises and victory, will crowd vividly into the minds of these able, hard-working and devoted musicians during the new session of concerts that inscribes indelibly on the pages of history the wonderful fact that the Hallé Orchestra is one hundred years *alive*.

In the history of all orchestras one of the obvious truisms is that, next to the conductor, the work of the Leader plays a crucial part and makes an indispensable contribution to the efficient functioning and the artistic attainments of the organization. There is little need at this stage to expatiate on what Laurance Turner has meant to the Hallé since 1939, when he was appointed. Immaculate, imperturbable, seemingly as cool at the end of the most exacting concert as he is before walking on to the platform, for not far short of twenty years his unflurried mastery of his role is as expertly recognized by his chief and his colleagues as it is warmly admired by the public. From my own knowledge and observation I cannot conceive the circumstance that would disarray a hair on his head or disturb the smooth, boyish-looking tranquillity of his face. Soft, laconic and effacing in speech, he is content, as the rest of us are, to let the eloquent discourses of his fine instrument speak for him. We may also rightly own the great debt owed by us all to his gifted predecessors whose names are appended, some of whom have been mentioned in the course of this narrative: C. A. Seymour (1858-75); Ludwig Strauss (1875-88); Willy Hess (1888-95); Adolf Brodsky (1895-96); L. Risegari (1896-1904); Rawdon Briggs (1905-13); Arthur Catterall (1914-24); John Bridge (1925-27); Alfred Barker (1927-38).

The Two Free Trade Halls

Two Free Trade Halls have given the Hallé Orchestra a home for its great work during the hundred years of its existence. During the fierce campaign against the Corn Laws, in which the Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association, subsequently known as the Anti-Corn Law League, played such an important part, the problem of an adequate meeting-place for mass demonstrations became acute. Manchester had no buildings large enough to hold the public anxious to participate in the vital political controversy. So Richard Cobden came to the rescue. He presented the League with some land in St. Peter's Fields, where a wooden pavilion was set up, opened in January 1840, and capable of accommodating up to five thousand people. In three years it was replaced by a brick building. Nominally this was the first Free Trade Hall and was used by the League until 1849 when the Corn Laws were repealed. But Manchester was able to use the hall for four years more.

The first musical event in the hall of which there is record took place in June 1843, when fifteen hundred performers appeared at the first meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Workmen's Singing Classes, under John Hullah. Then followed a series of weekly concerts by the Lancashire and Cheshire Philharmonic Society. 'Concerts for the People' were inaugurated in 1848 and continued until 1853 when the second hall was closed. The Manchester Public Hall Company was formed in 1855 to build a new hall, and this was opened in October of the following year. It was established as 'a monument to the merchants and traders who supported the League in all its struggles'. Such famous names as those of Bright, Cobden, George Wilson appeared in the list of subscribers to the new company. This third hall, the life of

which lasted from 1856 until 1940, became the best known in Manchester and the North. It offered hospitality not only to politics but also to boxing and wrestling, to dancing and speech days. Manchester could choose between Buffalo Bill and his Wild West entertainment and the American evangelists, Moody and Sankey. Orators of the eminence of Asquith, Balfour, 'Joe' Chamberlain, Campbell-Bannerman, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill have been seen and heard there. Charles Dickens had a long association, and lucky audiences were also beguiled by the stories in person of such distinguished explorers as Stanley, Scott and Nansen.

Musically, the new hall began to make history with concerts conducted by D. W. Banks and with soloists of the eminence of Sims Reeves, Balfe, Charles Lockey. The Gentlemen's Concerts were already in existence and Charles Hallé came to the Free Trade Hall to conduct that Association's orchestra, but it was not until January 1858 that he gave the first concert there to set off the Hallé Orchestra on its great, unbroken career.

In May 1921 the Manchester Corporation bought the Free Trade Hall from the Public Hall Company for £90,000. When the Second World War came the hall was taken over for use as offices until 22 December 1940, when the Luftwaffe's fire bombs destroyed it, leaving only a fragmentary shell of two outer walls. Two world-famous 'halls of song' in this country were thus wrecked from the air, the other being the Queen's Hall, London.

After the war ended, the Manchester Corporation instructed its City Architect, Mr. Leonard Howitt, to prepare plans for the reconstruction of the building, retaining the original façade. This was no easy commission, for the hall had to be so designed that it would serve music, dancing, political meetings, tennis and darts tournaments, and at the same time conform to acceptable and attractive requirements of architectural dignity.

It was a great day in Manchester, and for music in Britain, on 16 November 1951 when the Queen, now the Queen Mother, opened the Free Trade Hall in the presence of a distinguished

company drawn from all parts of the country. A Festival of Music worthily celebrated the occasion in the following week.

The Large Hall has a seating capacity of two thousand six hundred for concerts and of two thousand nine hundred for public meetings. The seats on the main floor are removable for dancing. On the English oak platform an orchestra of a hundred can be accommodated, and in the centre there is a piano lift from the air-conditioned instrument store which also houses the console of the Compton Electrone, the finest organ of its kind in the country. On the hall in general I quote this paragraph from the article by the architect, Mr. Leonard Howitt, in the Manchester Corporation's booklet on the Free Trade Hall:

'The general impression appears to be that it is a "friendly" hall, whilst the acoustic qualities in all parts are outstanding in their excellence.'

The Lesser Hall accommodates an audience of four hundred and twenty-five, and is suitable for concerts, meetings, dances, theatrical performances. Loud-speakers can be connected with the Large Hall, from which it is acoustically isolated, so that, when necessary, an overflow audience can hear what goes on in the other building.

There is no need here to itemize the various amenities of the Hallé's home. I will only say that it is worthy of its family and that the speed, energy and skill devoted by all who were involved in the reconstruction of the Free Trade Hall, particularly in the circumstances which then prevailed, have made their own essential contribution to the resurgence of the Hallé Orchestra.

What is it Worth?

An orchestra's affairs cannot be judged in the same way as those of an ironmongery store. A business establishment must make a profit to survive. An orchestra *has* to survive, profit or not, if the community it serves has a civic, to say nothing of an artistic, conscience. Not once only in the history of the Hallé all that love and work and artistry have done has very nearly been destroyed by lack of money. Financial crisis proved fatal to the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra in 1955, and gravely threatened the existence of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. The death of an orchestra is the putting out of a cultural beacon. The monstrous, adipose Goering whose Luftwaffe smashed to rubble the Hallé's old home used to boast: 'Whenever I hear the word "culture" I reach for my revolver. . . .' What a civilized contrast to that black, paranoiac outburst it would be if an English municipal treasurer should say: 'Whenever I hear the word "culture", I decree a bigger and better subsidy!'

The question of financial support, municipal and otherwise, has long been in the forefront of all discussions on musical policy in this country. As already indicated earlier in this volume, it is a question that stirs strong, and often acrimonious, controversy. Should public money be spent on fostering activities appealing to a minority of the people? If music-making does not 'pay', why should it be protected from the consequences that befall any other enterprise that cannot make its budget balance? Why should those who do not want music be mulcted to pay for the pleasures of those who do? Those are some of the familiar arguments put forward by the opponents of the utilization of public money to subsidize the activities of a symphony orchestra. The logical *reductio ad absurdum* of that proposition is that no public service is

warranted that does not claim the support of *all* the ratepayers. The further inevitable logical corollary is that there would then be no public libraries, no art galleries, no public parks, not to mention civic theatres, or national opera! Social and intellectual amenities are essential to a civilized society. Some of them may mean nothing to many inhabitants, but if my rates enable Bloggins next door to go to the free library to borrow the latest Agatha Christie why shouldn't his rates enable me to go to hear Barbirolli conduct Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*? A symphony orchestra is not an extravagant and dispensable luxury. With those who think that it is, no real argument is possible. It is a costly necessity.

A brochure on the whole problem as it affected the Hallé Orchestra was produced in 1950 by Mr. T. E. Bean, general manager of the Hallé Concerts Society, pointing out that when the orchestra was placed on a full-time basis and entrusted to Barbirolli, public appetite for music, stimulated by broadcasting and by the work of the education authorities, had made it clear a part-time orchestra, working for a limited season, could not satisfy this demand. The new Hallé, greatly extending its activities, growing in efficiency and power, not only ministered to audiences already existing but created new audiences. Moreover, it notched an achievement not previously recorded in the history of permanent symphony orchestras: it paid its way for four years.

The Hallé in those four years gave over two hundred and fifty concerts a year—over five a week in forty-eight weeks. Despite that number of concerts, good financial results could not have been attained if it were not that the salaries of the players were 40 per cent. lower than could have been obtained elsewhere; that the strength of the orchestra was 30 per cent. below that of the leading orchestras abroad; and that the conductor was able—and willing—to do the work of two men. Eliminate these factors, which do not apply to great continental and American orchestras, and even so exacting a programme of work as five concerts a week would not have enabled the orchestral budget to be balanced.

One course, and only one course, remained to be taken: that of public subsidy.

Continental and American orchestras are not expected to be 'paying propositions'. Musical perfection and a balance in the bank are incompatible without public financial support. Foreign orchestras are not asked to give more than three concerts a week, and even on that limited basis, compared to the Hallé's commitments, they are able to enjoy more generous rehearsal facilities. A picture of the contrast between the subsidy situation on the Continent and in Britain was drawn by critic Arthur Jacobs in the *Sunday Times* of 26 May 1957. (He is dealing with opera but the principle is the same.) He went to Cologne for the opening of the new Opera House there. He wrote:

'... With a population of some seven hundred thousand, Cologne is smaller than Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, or the combined Manchester and Salford. Yet outside London Britain has no permanent, settled opera company, while the Cologne theatre is one of more than fifty in West Germany presenting opera in a year-round season alongside operetta, ballet and plays.

'Not that Cologne provides a centre for the whole of an opera-hungry Rhineland. On the contrary, no fewer than nineteen opera-producing cities list their attractions in the pages of the Dusseldorf paper, *Der Mittag*. . . . All West German opera, one or two short festivals excepted, rests in the hands of theatres run and subsidized by municipalities or States (Laender). The administrative director of Cologne's three municipal theatres produced for me his estimates for the current year. The city's net subsidy to its theatres will be just over 4,800,000 marks (£400,000). Add to this the cost of the municipal orchestra, which takes part in opera, and the figure comes to little short of half a million pounds. *Compare the £15,000, approximately, which Manchester's chief cultural asset, the Hallé Orchestra, gets from the Arts Council and local authorities combined.*'

Objectors to subsidies here often produce the false argument that if only the prices of tickets to the concerts were raised the problem would be solved. The answer to this, as Mr. Bean pertinently

indicated, is that if the cost of concert-giving soars beyond the purses of the majority, the gap between revenue and expenditure is further increased, and the audiences reduced to

'those so eager for music (that like the alcohol addict) they were ready to deprive themselves of other necessities in order to satisfy the need; and those so rich that "a guinea a seat" would be no hardship. Instead, therefore, of music being what it has become during recent years, a valuable social amenity within reach of the whole community, it would once again become the preserve of the privileged few—so few, indeed, that the astronomical subsidies which would then be needed to make good the new deficits could no longer be justified on the grounds that the orchestra was meeting a great public need.'

And he produced some striking figures which tell their own story.

From August 1948 to July 1949, a period in which attendances at Hallé Concerts reached approximately a total of 407,000, the Society's statement of accounts showed a deficit of over £20,000. In that year the Arts Council contributed over £9,000 and the Manchester Corporation £9,000. The players' salaries were still 23 per cent. below those paid by comparable orchestras and the concert commitments still averaged over four concerts a week. Salary disparity compelled some of the players to look for higher remuneration elsewhere. In August 1949, the Society consulted the Manchester City Council with a view to bringing the Hallé salaries more into line with those paid elsewhere. To meet this extra cost the subsidies needed for the seasons 1949-50 and 1950-51 would be in the region of £28,000 a year.

There was also the question of the size of the orchestra. For over half a century before the war its strength had been a hundred players. It was plainly incumbent to restore the strength of the orchestra to that figure. It was unfair that the music-lovers of Manchester and the North should be deprived of the pleasure of listening to an orchestra of equal size to those of London or the Continent. In terms of finance that would mean an increase in the annual deficit of the Society of between £45,000 and £50,000,

depending on whether the weekly ration of concerts was to be four and a half or three and a half (a much better figure from the standpoint of musical results). The Hallé Society members themselves not only buy tickets for the concerts but also contribute to the upkeep of the orchestra (as has been shown) through guarantees of £100 or subscriptions of £10. The large and active Hallé Club contributes annually to the Society's Endowment Fund. These monies obviously cannot do much to reduce large deficits, but are, none the less, valuable additions to the Endowment Fund, providing a reserve for immediate operations, and eventually a source of income which would serve to diminish the need for public funds.

In the course of making suggestions for a solution of the vexed problem, Mr. Bean advocated that an annual Treasury guarantee of £25,000 to an established orchestra of the calibre of the Hallé, bringing music to all sections of one of the largest industrial communities in the country, would be money well spent, and, moreover, if a similar guarantee were made to the other permanent orchestras in the country, the total amount involved would be only a little more than the annual grant of £145,000 then paid to Covent Garden Opera. Concluding his survey and suggestions, Bean wrote that, assuming that the Treasury grant of £25,000 were made available from the beginning of the Arts Council's quinquennial period (1951-56), there would be £25,000 left to be found from Local Government coffers. What would be Manchester's proportion? It did not follow that Manchester alone would have to find it, as twenty-three other centres had, in a period of three years, assisted the Hallé by direct or indirect subsidies. But even if Manchester had to shoulder the whole burden, he said that the cost for the city would amount to 'less than a penny rate', in return for which Manchester would be assured of the services of an orchestra which would then have the chance to compare in every respect with the best in the world.

In 1951 Bean left the Hallé management, in which capacity he had rendered valuable and constructive services, to become the general manager of the Royal Festival Hall, in London. He was

succeeded by Mr. Kenneth Crickmore, who had previously been a colleague of Mr. Bean, as personal manager to Barbirolli and Director of the Sheffield Philharmonic Society. He was *au fait* with the knotty problems of orchestral finance and had had considerable experience of the 'entertainment' business, and certainly from the managerial point of view concert-giving falls into that category. And he was strongly persuaded that the full potentiality of the box-office had not been tapped for symphony orchestras. He was an ardent worker in the cause of youth and was anxious for orchestras, generally, and the Hallé particularly, to do more for the musically uneducated, for those to whom an orchestral concert represented truly alien territory. He had in conjunction with the Sheffield Education Committee launched a series of lectures to Youth Clubs in the poorer parts of the city, deliberately selecting those areas where—presumably—no thought of or desire for Hallé concerts existed. Partnered by Mr. Philip Rodgers, son of a well-known choral conductor, he stipulated that unless somehow a full muster from the Youth Clubs could be obtained there would be no lectures. The series—on 'The History of Jazz'—went on for six consecutive weeks. Jazz was jam to sugar the symphonic pill. The final lecture dealt with a Hallé concert to be held at Sheffield City Hall. The youngsters were exhorted to buy tickets for the platform, which the Sheffield Corporation had wisely made available at reasonable prices. From this beginning came an enthusiastic and idiosyncratic species of concert-goers in Sheffield known as the 'Barbirolli Platform Kids'. One of Sir John's most appreciated possessions is a propelling pencil collected for in the queues, inscribed 'from the Barbirolli Kids', and presented to him on his fiftieth birthday after a concert in the famous City Hall. But Crickmore had to leave Sheffield and his lectures to take up his new and important duties with the Hallé.

Meanwhile, the Bean brochure had been submitted to a conference of Lancashire and Cheshire local authorities with a suggestion that a joint pool be established from which the Hallé and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras would secure regular subsidies. The initial target was put at £50,000, but for one orchestra

only; not two. The conference rejected the figure as 'impossible', and substituted a target of £35,000. Negotiations were protracted, and it became apparent that no scheme could be put into effect for a year or two, and there was doubt about the ultimate amount. Manchester Corporation declared that it was unable to grant to the Hallé more than £9,000 a year, but that it would make this grant for three successive years. The deficiency which met Crickmore on taking office amounted to £16,000, after all subsidies other than that of the Manchester Corporation had been taken into account. The Hallé was faced then with a deficiency of at least £7,000 for that and the two ensuing seasons.

It would have been easy to argue that the Hallé Society should carry on until it got into the 'red', in the belief that the Corporation would jump to the rescue and pay up the residual deficiencies, particularly since the Corporation's contribution was so much lower than those which other cities were making to their orchestras. But the Hallé Committee felt that it was not in the best interests of music that policy should be based on guarantees against financial deficiency. Crickmore gave the orchestra a frank exposé of the situation, believing that adequate help would be withheld until every possibility of self-aid had been explored.

The orchestra, staunch and willing, took its coat off for an increase in the schedule of concerts; and in addition a series of Industrial and Summer Promenade concerts were introduced. By the end of the financial year, 1951-2—and, it must be pointed out, without the advantage of a full year to work in—the valiant and vigorous efforts of the orchestra and the management had reduced the original budgeted deficiency to £3,500. In the year 1952-3 the Society showed a surplus of £5,451, and in 1953-4 the full effect of the increased activities became cheerfully apparent in a surplus of £15,000 (the subsidies amounting to £25,000). One of the great needs of an orchestra, from the business point of view, is to accumulate reserves. Bad years must, if possible, be provided for. The welfare of the musicians must be safeguarded. Even with regular contractual employment in a full-time orchestra, musicians do not enjoy the security of civil servants. Crickmore

and the Hallé Society were thinking about the human as well as the monetary aspect of the problem of keeping an orchestra not merely alive, but in a condition of physical health and economic well-being. The business of providing the public with music and other forms of entertainment is a chancy one for many practitioners. Wars, slumps, the advent of new media of entertainment may—and do—create serious unemployment. And among orchestral players a chronic rheumatic complaint can put an end to a career. Crickmore, who had too often experienced the unpleasant necessity of telling a player that his services could no longer be retained, was anxious that the Hallé should operate an adequate pension scheme for retired players after long and loyal service.

It is true that in Richter's régime a Pension Fund was inaugurated in 1899 and, ever since, an annual concert is added on to the season's schedule, and the proceeds are devoted to this superannuation scheme. But it is inadequate and can provide only nominal weekly sums to any who need to draw on it.

The Hallé Committee was fully conscious of these needs. The chairmanship had been wisely given to Mr. Leonard F. Behrens, following the lamented death of Mr. Philip Godlee who, as chairman, had played so notable a part in the reconstruction of the Hallé. Mr. Behrens was well fitted to follow his distinguished predecessor, for the Behrens family had always devoted itself to the cause of music and musicians in Manchester, as earlier pages have indicated. (It was Gustav Behrens who donated £1,000 in 1929 to start an Endowment Fund through which real expansion and independence might eventually be secured.) The chairman and honorary treasurer, Sir James Lythgoe, the ex-City Treasurer of Manchester, announced for the Hallé Society that its declared policy now was to strengthen reserves and to place the Society on a sound and solid financial basis. The magnificent response of the orchestra to all the demands made upon it and the unwavering standard of the team-work between orchestra, conductor and management resulted in artistic and financial achievement of which all could be proud. By the year 1954 the Hallé had consolidated its

position and accumulated reserves of £40,000, but at the same time it was made clear at that year's annual general meeting of the Society that this sum was still inadequate, representing not much more than a quarter of the Society's turnover. Nevertheless, in 1955-6, the Arts Council informed the Hallé authorities that since their grants could be made only on the basis of need, and as the Hallé did not appear to be in need, the annual grant would have to be cut.

In the course of its annual report for 1954-55 the Arts Council stated that:

'In spite of economic difficulties several of the bodies which receive Arts Council subsidies have had a good trading year, and have managed to produce a surplus, sometimes substantial, of income over expenditure. The Arts Council has consequently decided to reduce their subsidies for the current year: to reduce them, only, not to withdraw them. This action, however, has evoked expressions of disappointment from those bodies which have presented these encouraging balance sheets. The Arts Council, they say, is "penalizing success", in discouraging thrift, good management, and all those other virtues which go to balancing a budget. . . .

'Practically none of our orchestras or repertory theatres has a penny-piece of capital, and any surplus they can accumulate is evidently desirable against those rainy days which are such a familiar feature of the climate of the arts. Many of them, moreover, are badly in need of funds for capital expenditure on buildings or equipment. The Arts Council is only too willing to recognize such needs and to encourage the building up of the modest surplus to meet them. What it cannot do, as a trustee of public money, is to permit an energetic and ambitious grant-aided body to amass a surplus equal, say, to a year's total income. It is the nature of some of these admirable bodies to hanker after a "safe" reserve; but if that reserve is to contain a large annual contribution from public funds, the aspiration is clearly inadmissible. The purpose of a subsidy is to make ends meet—

and perhaps leave a bit over; its intention is, manifestly, not to help the recipient to increase his deposit account while purporting to live on the dole.

'The Arts Council is obliged to administer a means test to the bodies which seek its support, especially as there are more of them than can be accommodated on its books at present; but the test is sympathetically applied. If it were to reduce its grants to a level which wiped out the surplus an orchestra or theatre had achieved, by good luck or good management, then the charge of "penalizing success" might be justified, although it would remain debatable. But the Arts Council applies no such punitive policy; it merely reduces, by a quarter or a third, a grant which is shown to exceed, for the time being, the actual needs of the organization, and it still permits a sizeable portion of the surplus to be reserved for bad times or capital requirements. Any system of subsidies is apt to make its beneficiaries believe they have prescriptive or permanent rights to the figure they first thought of. The Arts Council does not accept that kind of arithmetic.'

That statement of the official view about subsidies is clear and categoric. And, as could have been expected, controversy followed. In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in November 1955, Mr. Gerald McDonald, Regional Director of the Arts Council, made reference to the treasurer's comments, at the annual general meeting of the Hallé Society, on the reduced grant from the Arts Council, and added that

'readers who have not seen the annual report and accounts of the Society may, therefore, be surprised to learn that out of total reductions of £12,000 in income from public funds, only £1,000 in the year under review is attributable to the Arts Council. The remaining £11,000 reflects the lack of contribution from the Lancashire and Cheshire authorities, including Manchester. In fact, the Arts Council contributed £11,000 out of direct grants and guarantees to the Hallé Society totalling £12,895.'

Sir James Lythgoe, the Hallé's honorary treasurer, replied at some length, in the *Manchester Guardian*, pointing out that from 1 April 1955 the Arts Council reduced their grant from £12,000 to £9,000, only £1,000 of the reduction being effective in the Hallé financial year ending on 31 July 1955. Its financial year, 1954-5, came within the first year of the joint scheme of the Lancashire and Cheshire authorities. Under that (revised) scheme the intention was that the Hallé Society should receive £3,000 in respect of their financial year 1954-5, and that for a period of five years, beginning in 1956-7, it was recommended that the Hallé Society should receive £11,000 per annum.

Discussions were continuing (wrote Sir James) with the Manchester Corporation with regard to its position in the first two years of the joint scheme, which would affect the Hallé Society's financial years 1954-5 and 1955-6.

'The true position, therefore,' [concluded the treasurer] 'is that if the present basis of grant from the Arts Council is continued and the revised proposals for the joint scheme of the Lancashire and Cheshire authorities are approved for the year 1956-7 onwards, the Society will receive (a) a firm grant of £11,000 per annum for five years from the local authorities within the joint scheme of Lancashire and Cheshire; and (b) a grant at the rate of £9,000 per annum, subject to annual review, from the Arts Council.

'Unless the Arts Council restore the cut made in their grant, the grants from the Lancashire and Cheshire authorities will have been restored to approximately the same level as in recent years prior to 1954-5 and placed on a firm basis for five years, while the Arts Council grant will have been reduced by twenty-five per cent. and remain on an uncertain basis.'

This evoked a further letter to the *Manchester Guardian* from Sir W. E. Williams, Secretary-General of the Arts Council, which stated:

'All admirers of the work of the Hallé Society will read with satisfaction Sir James Lythgoe's forecast of the support which,

the Society is likely to receive over the next five years from the local authorities of Lancashire and Cheshire. The Arts Council grant from the Treasury is subject to annual review, and the Council is, therefore, unable to offer quinquennial grants to the bodies it supports. As a dispenser of public funds the Arts Council, moreover, is obliged to apply a "means test" in determining its allocations to the societies on its books. On the other hand, the Arts Council, year by year, gives early and specific notice of the grants it proposes to make, pays those grants promptly, and never leaves its associated bodies in doubt about what they are likely to get.'

In December 1955 the *Guardian* printed another communication from Sir James Lythgoe, in reply to the Secretary-General of the Arts Council. This is what it said:

'Perhaps the most significant part of Sir William E. Williams's letter is that it states that the Arts Council's grants to the bodies it supports must be determined on the basis of a "means test" applied annually. It may be questioned whether such a basis of fixing grants to these bodies is the most appropriate or gives the best incentive to wise and economical administration of the affairs of a great orchestra. The Hallé committee thinks it is not.

'Such a basis is not universally applied in the dispensing of public funds in aid of worthy cultural and educational institutions. The grants in aid of universities are, for instance, determined for a quinquennial period on the basis of estimates. Local authorities also give grants-in-aid to educational and other institutions in suitable cases without applying an annual "means test". It seems unfortunate that the Arts Council cannot be allowed to exercise, in suitable cases, a similar discretion to distribute the funds at its disposal without applying an annual "means test".'

In the fifty-seventh annual report of the Hallé Concerts Society it was stated that a grant of £3,000 for 1955-6 had been received from the joint scheme of the Lancashire and Cheshire local

authorities. In that year the contribution of the Arts Council was £7,667 compared with £11,000 in 1954-5; £12,000 in 1953-4; and in 1956-7 £5,334 plus £5,000 guarantee against loss.

An important matter of principle, about which opinions differed—and still differ—sharply, concerns the method by which an orchestra is supported by public funds. Should it be by grants or by guarantees? A guarantee against loss is really a negative benefit. It simply means that the orchestra avoids a deficit. It does not put money into the coffers for further development or help to build up essential reserves. A grant, on the other hand, if it is adequate, makes possible a *positive* benefit. Money can be set aside for that always-possible 'rainy day', and, of course, for more urgent and immediate purposes in which is included—as it should be—the future welfare of the musicians on whose continued efforts the very existence and reputation of the orchestra depend. The administrative efficiency with which orchestras are managed inevitably varies; some are well run, some badly. It is difficult, as I see it, to rebut the Hallé's contention that the Arts Council's 'means test'—which is specifically acknowledged by the Council—bears adversely upon an orchestra when it is successful, when, by its artistic merits and by the wise administration which governs its operations, it makes money. By the perverse logic of the 'means test' an orchestra steering a dull, unenterprising musical course, managed with less efficiency than is properly praiseworthy, receives greater aid from public funds than an orchestra which is enterprising in its programmes, keenly fastidious about its artistic standards, and managed with far-seeing business efficiency.

The Arts Council, of course, does not create its own funds. It is not, in its own right, a milch-cow. It is governed, strictly governed, by that never-slumbering arbiter of financial fate, the Treasury. Its eyes often alight menacingly and inexplicably on odd targets, and equally inexplicably are turned away from others which might well be critically scrutinized to the lasting benefit of us all. Public accounts frequently reveal shocking wastage of money. Enterprises are begun and left unfinished, or, obviously, should never have been begun. It is not only in war, when the necessity

for victory outweighs all other considerations, but also in peace that the taxpayers' money goes gurgling down the largest and longest of drains without let or hindrance. It is a terse truism that a fraction of the money spent on one hydrogen bomb could solve the problems of all the orchestras in this country.

It is nonsense to say that Britain cannot afford to subsidize on an adequate scale those musical organizations that contribute to the nation's culture. It does not matter where they are located. They serve the nation as well as their own region. Nobody would think today of referring to the Hallé Orchestra as 'a Manchester band'. It is the pride of Manchester, yes; Manchester provides it with 'a local habitation and a name'; but artistically it belongs to the nation. It has brought honour to the nation on its various continental tours. Think of what additional prestige it would bring to Britain—and, naturally, to itself—if Sir John were enabled to take it on a tour of America, where he himself established an international reputation which has, ever since, been nourished by his incomparable efforts for the Hallé here at home. It has long been the ambition of the Hallé Society to send him and the orchestra across the Atlantic. The value of such a cultural export cannot be estimated, either in terms of finance or musical prestige. Such a visit could not be classified as a 'local' enterprise. It takes the form at once of a national venture. The Hallé is Britain's oldest orchestra. Why, even up to the hundredth year of its existence, has it not crossed the ocean to the United States? The answer is as simple as it is significant: the Hallé cannot afford to go to America. American orchestras wishing to come here are much more favourably circumstanced. Wealthy private patrons make their tours possible. Such conditions do not prevail in Britain. Earlier in this story mention was made of the proposal to send Sir Hamilton Harty and the Hallé to France chiefly to give performances of the music of Berlioz. But that plan had to be abandoned for lack of the necessary funds. A city like Cologne can find approximately £500,000 a year for its municipal theatres and its municipal orchestra! In the last war Cologne suffered from devastatingly heavy bombing, and in one mass raid six hundred

acres of homes, public buildings and factories were destroyed. And Germany lost the war. For the vanquished, opera and theatre subsidies on a lavish, certainly an adequate scale. For the victor—what?

Yet, according to the Hallé Society's general manager, an examination of the balance sheets of the world's great orchestras shows, if all subsidies are omitted, that *the Hallé Orchestra earns more box-office revenue than any other orchestra in the world*. Another important factor to be borne in mind in unravelling the tangled skeins of finance is the attitude of the Musicians' Union, always almost pathologically sensitive about the rights of the executant musicians over whom it watches with the vociferous, jealous concern of a highly suspicious hen. The Union, not unnaturally, began to ask itself whether the policy of the Hallé Society was not, in fact, detrimental to the interests of the players for the reason that they appeared to be working harder than the musicians in other orchestras merely in order to reduce subsidies. And by corollary, if the number of the Hallé's yearly concerts were reduced the Society would then be able to qualify for the old—and higher—level of subsidies. Further, although the Hallé Society like other full-time orchestral organizations has a 'permanent' employment contract with the musicians, some of the essential functions for which the orchestra is required have to be paid on a casual basis. These include gramophone records and sound and television broadcasting. Negotiations for rates for these services are conducted between the Musicians' Union and those who engage the Hallé Orchestra. The Society is not allowed to participate in the negotiations. Let me give an example of how this arrangement works: during the year 1955-6 the Hallé musicians received an average of £3 10s. *od.* per week in extra money for these services. If the Hallé, or a similar organization, succeeded in obtaining a considerable amount of such extra work and pay, then the gross remuneration to the musicians could not fairly be regarded as inadequate. But—a 'but' that cannot be ignored—when the Musicians' Union negotiates with such a society as the Hallé, or a similarly functioning organization, it is

concerned only with *basic* rates. Now, in the event of an award being made in favour of the players, when the Hallé Society appeals to those who subsidize it for further monies to pay for the new increases, the subsidizing body naturally wants to know what is the *gross* pay of the individual fees for recording, sound broadcasting, television. Consequently, the granting, reduction or withholding of subsidies is conditioned by the answer to the 'gross pay' interrogation.

It would certainly seem to an outside observer, and one with no financial experience or capacity, that the time is approaching when it will be necessary for the musicians to decide whether they wish a permanent salaried all-in contract where societies like the Hallé are free to arrange their schedules as they please, or whether they would prefer to revert to the old system under which payment is made per performance, with differing rates for different towns. It does not need great acumen to realize that the present system where casual rates are, as it were, superimposed on the permanent contract may prove to be unworkable.

The close interrelation of the artistic policy and the finance of an orchestra is so little realized by the general public that it is worth devoting a little space to the subject. It is useful and illuminating to know some of the factors governing the day-to-day activities of an organization which is seeking more subsidies and about whose subsidization, adequate or otherwise, there is perennial controversy. Mr. K. E. Crickmore read a paper last year to the Manchester Statistical Society on 'Finance and the Permanent Symphony Orchestras', which contains much that is highly relevant to the present theme. Under the standard contract agreed between the Orchestral Employers' Association and the Musicians' Union—a contract which applies to the six permanent orchestras in Great Britain—the musicians may not take part in rehearsals or performances totally more than thirty hours a week, or a hundred hours in a four-weekly period. This does not include time spent in travel. Budgeting for rehearsals is a most important item. Account must be taken of the skill of the orchestra; allowance made for emergencies; the difficulty (or otherwise) of the

programme must be noted. The permanent conductor, having established a repertoire, will not need to spend a long time on familiar items; a guest conductor will, if he has not conducted them with the orchestra on previous occasions.

Crickmore worked out, in his paper, a most interesting table showing the number of concerts which can be given according to differing rehearsal requirements. The table ranged from fifty-nine concerts a year (for which would be allotted five three-hour rehearsal sessions to each programme—a familiar practice abroad) to two hundred and fifty concerts a year, a maximum figure (with two hours' rehearsal per concert). The table is based on the fact that the orchestra is available for about one thousand hours in the course of a year.

'The difference in income' [says Crickmore] 'between a schedule of fifty-nine and one of two hundred and fifty concerts per annum would vary from orchestra to orchestra, and in any event would be difficult to establish for a variety of reasons. It can be safely assumed, however, that it would be of the order of, at least, £50,000 per annum—a considerable sum when one considers that two of the permanent orchestras give two hundred and fifty concerts already and yet require to be subsidized in addition.'

And he goes on to remind us that symphony orchestra managements are continually pressed by well-meaning persons to pursue a musical policy which would resuscitate five rehearsals for each concert.

'Those who criticize the limitations of the repertoire of the permanent orchestra seldom realize the amount of finance involved in being able to prepare each concert separately and with what a continental conductor would regard as adequate rehearsal. A much more moderate demand would be the allocation of six hours' rehearsal per concert (an allocation which recently caused a conductor of international fame to issue a statement decrying the limited rehearsal time made available by

British orchestras). The difference in revenue to an orchestra such as the Hallé between a schedule of one hundred and twenty-five and one of two hundred and fifty concerts per year, could be represented by a sum of approximately £32,500 per annum.'

An orchestra giving two hundred and fifty concerts in a year can average only two hours' rehearsal per concert. But how can even a 'reasonable', let alone an ideal, standard of performance be achieved with such inadequate preparation? A two-hour rehearsal of a two-hour concert makes it impossible for the conductor to give the programme more than a 'run through'; there can be no proper *rehearsal*. Assume that that situation were accepted. The level of performance would at once be lowered; the reputation of conductor and orchestra would decline; the critics would be quickly and unanimously on the war-path; public enthusiasm and support would diminish; box-office receipts would drop; the financial situation would be worse than ever; and the orchestra would go out of existence.

There is another answer, and I liberally paraphrase the Crickmore thesis. The answer is the repetition of programme items. But here again the repetition of programme items in the hall where the orchestra normally plays is not going to attract the public. It is more likely to repel them. Then the orchestra has to travel, so that instead of giving, say, Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony at the Manchester Free Trade Hall hard on the heels of the previous performance, the players go to Sheffield or Hanley or Bradford or Swansea. And nobody should need reminding of the increased cost of travelling, and of subsistence (where necessary).

Both financial and artistic considerations join to govern the number of concerts in a given year. Nor are the artistic needs confined to the contents of the programme. Crickmore makes the same point as Bean: how many concerts should a musician be called upon to play in a week or a year? He is a sensitive human being, and the combined mental and physical strain of playing in a heavy series of concerts puts music-making in a more onerous

class than navvying. Have you heard a tired orchestra play? As to programme content, the Hallé Society's manager makes no bones about his view that those who plan the programmes can affect an orchestra's income considerably—'so much so that I imagine in all cases, but certainly in the case of my own orchestra (at present rates of subsidy), enough to bring about insolvency.'

At the time of quoting the above words, I came across a letter in the *Daily Telegraph* from Sir Orme Sargent which, though it does not deal with music and orchestras, is concerned with such artistic organizations as provincial museums and the question of maintaining them. Rebutting a criticism by a previous correspondent directed against our provincial museums for failing to provide attractions similar to those offered by the Art Institute in Detroit, Sir Orme stated that practically all our provincial museums, except a few maintained by rich local authorities interested in the arts, are

'in a parlous financial state owing to the continuing fall in the value of money. . . . The whole question of our museums, national and regional, needs urgent attention in order that a requisite standard should be established throughout the country. The Government, to whom the Joint Committee of the Museums Association, the Carnegie Trust and the Arts Council appealed on this matter, has replied that it is not concerned with independent museums which must look to their local authorities if they are to be rescued from extinction. If the Government adhere to this view, the result will be that most of the independent museums, good, bad and indifferent, will have to close their doors in the near future. For it is not realistic to expect local ratepayers to shoulder the whole burden of what is a national asset. . . .'

After indicating the plight of the Holburne of Menstrie Museum at Bath ('a model of what a small provincial art gallery should be'), Sir Orme Sargent ends his letter: 'Yes, indeed, the state of the majority of museums in Britain is a national disgrace. But please do not let us blame the curators. If one cannot make bricks

without straw, one certainly cannot make museums without money.'

For museums read orchestras!

Just as the housewife finds her weekly budget costing more in these days of steadily rising prices, so the orchestra manager has to face increased charges, covering the musical and the administrative spheres: the salaries of musicians; the rent of concert halls; advertising and printing costs; soloists' fees; augmentation of the orchestra for special works by the engagement of 'extras'. All these, and more, constitute part of the difficult, but essential, business of keeping an orchestra on its financial feet. Those who are opposed or indifferent to the expenditure of public money on music are naturally strengthened in their attitude by the rise in living costs. In times of depression they impatiently brush aside all ideas of such expenditure; in times of prosperity their pachydermatous unconcern about music keeps their opposition consistent! And they are a numerous and vocal crowd. It does not require a university education to be moronic about the arts. I remember some of the gems of anti-culture that fell from the lips of municipal representatives when the future of the Bournemouth Orchestra trembled in the balance; when the financial situation of the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra was agitating the eloquence of some of the Brighton Councillors; when the National Orchestra of Wales was moving towards the final stages of its chequered career; when, more recently, the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra became overwhelmed in a crisis which ended its brave, brief existence. I have never been able to understand why it is that certain people react to the proposition to spend money on an orchestra as if it were inherently sinful. What? Money for a lot of *musicians*? The same folk will cheerfully spend public money on elaborate decorations for some fatuous local event or some official jamboree whose *raison d'être* has more connection with the exercise of the municipal digestive organs than with the promotion of any public good.

But whatever the ignorance and prejudice of the opposition, those who care for music (and the other arts), who believe that

it is as essential to the spirit of a civilized community as main drainage to the body, must boldly continue to advocate their case. The wealthy individual patron is, for all practical purposes today, as dead as the dodo. Private enterprise and ordinary business methods cannot solve the problem. And the problem would be simple, as I say, if virtue were its own reward; if by brilliantly sustained artistic standards and genius in programme building an orchestra could achieve financial solidarity and a bank balance adequate for its legitimate requirements in the future. But we have seen that hard work, superb performances, far-ranging musical enterprise, the acquisition of a glowing local, national and international reputation do not necessarily produce unendangered financial solvency. On the contrary, they can—and do—aggravate financial difficulties. The story of the Hallé Orchestra offers a sharp and powerful exemplification of this truth. It is a sad axiom in the musical world—as, no doubt, in others—that it can be profitable to be mediocre; that timidity in policy and function can pay dividends.

I do not believe that for this problem, compromising, though sometimes tactically and temporarily unavoidable, is of any use. We should not temper the musical wind to the shorn lamb of pusillanimous finance. The inhibitory, destructive phrase, 'We cannot afford . . .', operates in art with the deadly efficacy of a hand grenade. Variations on that theme express themselves in the advocacy of smaller orchestras; of programmes rigidly confined to the established repertoire; of fewer concert engagements; and of a recognition of the fact that music is a luxury at any time, and that men and women do not perish for lack of it. Let me acknowledge at once that many people who have closely examined orchestral finance are honestly unconvinced of the necessity, and particularly of the desirability, of granting heavy subsidies. It would be an unfair exaggeration to say that such people believe that subsidies can be dispensed with entirely. But it is incontestable that they have right on their side when they point out that there are certain people in the artistic world who do not even try to justify outside aid.

Artists should certainly not ask for subsidy just for the sake of subsidy. If they do not themselves make the efforts they should, they are clearly not entitled to be extraneously financed. There would be no end to the chaos that would follow such a policy; it would be the economics of Bedlam. There is no reason why artists should be immune from a sense of loyalty to their fellow tax-payers and rate-payers, and before asking for public subsidy they should do everything in their power, as they are morally obliged to do, to find the money in other ways and from other sources.

Artistic organizations should try to run their affairs with the utmost possible economy, consistent, of course, with the maintenance of artistic standards. And it is an acknowledged fact that laymen serving on councils and committees are not infrequently presented with instances of the habit of artists and those possessed with what is euphemistically described as 'the artistic temperament' of squandering money unnecessarily and even recklessly.

There is also the danger that if demands are not kept to reasonable proportions the Government or the municipal authorities will demand control in return for the advancement of large sums of money. The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, for example, receives much larger subsidies (from both the Liverpool Corporation and the Arts Council) than are granted to the Hallé. I notice, by the way, that at the annual meeting of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society in July this year it was stated that the orchestra is now 'run on the lines of a corporation committee'. There is now a majority of Corporation members on the respective committees of both the Liverpool and Birmingham Orchestras, which are heavily subsidized by comparison with the Hallé. There is much concern in the musical world about the dangers of music getting into the hands of politicians, and, in fact, far-seeing councillors who vote for reductions in subsidies often do so, not out of meanness, still less from any indifference to music, but out of a desire to ensure that control of orchestras shall not pass out of the hands of those who both love and are knowledgeable about music.

Another point to which it is fair that attention should be directed is that it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that artistic standards will necessarily benefit if the number of concerts is cut down. It is sensible to assume that, as footballers prefer to play in an actual match rather than indulge in rigorous practice, so musicians are happier giving a concert than spending most of their time in the rehearsal room. I could instance one or two of our brilliant solo artists whose engagements during the year seem to be on an astronomical scale but whose virtuosity is in no way adversely affected by their constant and strenuous work.

Again, no matter how many concerts are scheduled, a permanent orchestra cannot play for more than an average of twenty-five hours a week. The Hallé Orchestra gives two hundred and fifty concerts a year, and it is from the concerts that the revenue is derived by which subsidies can be reduced, and, perhaps, one day completely abolished. An orchestra is fully entitled to be aggrieved if the majority of the concerts entail long and tiring journeys away from its base. The Hallé is making strenuous efforts to arrange more concerts within its area, and also to see that when it has to give concerts elsewhere it will be enabled to stay for several nights and thus avoid the hectic and exhausting business of one-night stands.

There is no short and simple cut to the satisfactory solution of the problem of subsidies, but the plain thesis of this chapter is that music, like books, is a necessity, not a luxury, and that the fact that people who are not interested in music and the activities of an orchestra have to pay for its upkeep is not only not to be regarded as a hardship to them but is a duty and privilege of their citizenship. The Hallé Orchestra reaches its centenary at the peak of its prowess. It stands worthily and confidently alongside the great orchestras of Europe and America. It has earned its laurels not only in the friendly, familiar and sympathetic atmosphere of its own home, but also under the critical auditory scrutiny of audiences proudly aware of long traditions of musical performance and interpretation at the apex of attainable perfection. You cannot trade base musical counters in the concert halls of Vienna,

Salzburg, Amsterdam. People who have spent their lives in the enjoyment of the magnificent ministrations of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam do not readily tender to others the garlands of their appreciation. And we know how the Hallé Orchestra has been welcomed and acclaimed where music is not only the breath of life but its golden crown and vindication; welcomed not with the merely polite acceptance of social and civilized custom, but with the spontaneously proffered accolade of true delight. The Hallé has conquered where conquest was most difficult and where the prize was most to be cherished.

As a musical organization and an integral, indispensable part of Britain's cultural life, the Hallé Orchestra has incontestably established its right to be put beyond the perpetual nagging of pecuniary worry and uncertainty. I do not wish to suggest that the Hallé Orchestra is a sacrosanct entity beyond other organizations devoted to the arts. I have no roots in Manchester, no birthplace patriotism stemming from the strong and rugged characteristics of the North; geographically I am 'neutral'; yet to me, as to thousands of others outside Lancashire, the Hallé has long seemed to belong to us equally with those who are able to crowd into the Free Trade Hall and Belle Vue for its regular concerts. That feeling has never been more active and powerful than now. The people who fill the concert halls of the country, who make constant and intelligent use of the public libraries, who are not to be denied their stimulating share in opera and ballet, who must regularly refresh their eyes and minds in the nation's art galleries, form, in a real sense, a community to all of whom in all seasons 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever'. For forty years I have enjoyed membership of that unique community in London from which the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts derive their inexhaustible vitality. Few can really know one another in that nightly throng assembling with bubbling pleasure and anticipation throughout the two summer months to listen to a vast repertoire of music. Yet we all 'know' one another as human beings who could not be tempted by any other induce-

ment to shun participation in a feast that sometimes is not without its hot physical discomforts.

It cannot be true now, if ever it was, that the future of the Hallé is the concern only of the people of Manchester and the contiguous areas. It is a national artistic duty to make the future of the Hallé secure. It is, of course, much easier to say that, and to mean it, than it is to achieve the hard, practical reality. None the less, the issue is so important and the existing subsidy policy so much the subject of controversy that a concerted effort should be made to try to solve present difficulties. What a fitting coping-stone on this Centenary Season would be the establishment of a subsidy policy that would satisfy the acknowledged artistic requirements of the Hallé Orchestra. The orchestra and all who care for it must look ahead beyond these hundred years. Even a centenary is little justification for merely sitting and looking back pleased and tired, still less smug.

There are still new worlds to conquer. New audiences are coming into existence and in an artistic, intellectual and economic climate different from that which existed when many of us thrilled to our first Wagner programme and caught our breath in Tchaikovsky's 'Pathetic' Symphony. There are more distractions waiting for my grandchildren than there were to lure my ignorant, untutored ears. I am stunned into a sad, unwilling admiration today at the expertness with which children of twelve and less discuss rock 'n' roll and skiffle and the wide knowledge they have of the practitioners of strange noises that leave me bewildered—and aurally injured. It may not be easier in the future to multiply the audiences for great music. The confusion of thought, uncertainty of aim, and grimly nourished fears of the future, the cynical discarding of standards, the arrogant selfishness of the human ego, and the blatantly avowed dishonesties which mark and maim our post-war life are not calculated to enlarge and intensify the desire for the things that are 'pure, lovely and of good report'. Not every kind of crisis, of pressure on the human spirit, sends people to the uplift and solace of music. The war did. There was constant, imminent peril then. We lived our days and

nights under a rain of bombs. Our sense of community under blind, indiscriminate, deadly danger was so acute that it became a kind of fellowship of casual, smiling stoicism. Concert halls were as dangerous as any places could be. Yet they were packed, and no warning siren could unpack them.

Today's conditions produce different reactions. We are fissiparous again, not coalesced. Instead of being steeled by fire we are being gnawed at by fear. A rise in the cost of living cannot band us together in fierce loyalty and unity as a savage raid by Hitler's bombers could—and did. The present psychological situation is not likely to change because there is no sure prospect that the external circumstances in which we live will radically alter. This may be a pessimistic view, but it is safer not to budget on a basis of extravagant hopes. The Centenary will not reduce the Hallé's needs. More is expected of you when you are at the top. All friends and supporters of the orchestra will desire for it that the next ten years shall be even more fruitful than the past ten years. Who would not like to see the Hallé embark on extended tours of the continents of Europe and America: I remember seasons in London between the two wars when there was almost an embarrassment of orchestral riches in the tours of the Berlin and the Vienna Philharmonic orchestras, the Concertgebouw, and finally the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Toscanini. The London concerts were part of extended European tours of these famous Orchestras. One does not need to be a mathematician to get an idea of the cost of such itineraries, particularly that of transporting over a hundred musicians and their valuable instruments from New York to Europe. For years the European orchestras were regular visitors to this country. In the coming years the Hallé Orchestra should be enabled to make annual tours on the Continent, not just occasional visits. And at the earliest opportunity it should go to the United States of America, proudly carrying the heaped honours of its hundred years of noble, unbroken service to the art of music.

But it will not be possible to organize this kind of British export

if those who are responsible for the Hallé are weighed down and bedevilled by financial worry. Few give a second monetary thought to the sending of political and industrial missions of goodwill across the seas. They cost money. The results achieved are not always commensurate with that expenditure. But it would be both churlish and shortsighted to suggest that such missions do no good and that they should be stopped. There could be no doubt at all about the goodwill value of any Hallé mission. Past experience, if limited, is a convincing proof of its benefits.

In an age of ramified and extensive political, economic, educational and social planning, it is fundamentally necessary that there should be musical planning too—and on an ambitious scale. Excluding the B.B.C. orchestras there are five permanent symphony orchestras in this country today. They are:

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Hallé Orchestra
Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Scottish National Orchestra

To maintain them in the condition necessary for the vital work they do in and for their localities and for the nation is a national as well as a local responsibility. The Concertgebouw Orchestra—to take one example—which is twenty-six years younger than the Hallé, was at first, like the Hallé, supported by private funds, but today it receives a subsidy from the State, the town and the province. Holland takes no risks.

Just as this book was going to press, Kenneth Crickmore announced at this year's International Festival at Edinburgh (which the Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Sir John, opened with an all-Elgar concert) that the Hallé Society intended to challenge the system of Government grants made through the Arts Council, and would urge a change from Government or local authority guarantees against loss to straight grants. 'The Hallé is penalised,' he said, 'because we have a reserve fund of £30,000 for pensions and other schemes. The present Treasury system of guarantees

against losses according to needs places a premium on inefficiency.'

He called for an independent national committee to look into the whole question of public subsidies for music, in view of the fresh financial crises which were looming up for the permanent symphony orchestras. The recent award increasing the pay of rank-and-file players from £11 10s. to £13 10s. a week, plus between £2 and £3 a week for recording and broadcasting fees would add about £10,000 a year to the Hallé Society's wages bill. This would involve a drain of £300 a week on the Hallé's £30,000 reserve, and he pointed out further that as the best 'box office' orchestra in the country the Hallé would have to go on playing at two hundred and seventy concerts a year, plus rehearsals. Some foreign orchestras played at no more than one hundred concerts a year.

The Hallé received a yearly grant of £6,000 from Manchester Corporation and £3,000 from neighbouring local authorities, but paid £8,000 a year to the Corporation for renting the Free Trade Hall. The Corporation was in receipt of other returns from catering during the Hallé concerts. On the face of it, said Crickmore, the Corporation made £2,000 profit. The Arts Council contributions were being reduced from £12,000 a year to £5,000, and the Hallé had been working for some time on an average of £9,000 a year in grants, when other orchestras were receiving £15,000.

'Here you have an organization,' he said, 'which started up again in 1951 with a deficit. By coaxing concert promoters in different towns into sharing programmes we have kept rehearsals down to fifteen hours per programme. A rehearsal may cost between £700 and £800. We have travelled a hundred miles there and a hundred miles back to one good-paying box-office concert when we might easily have been rehearsing and laying claim to more guarantees against losses. The Hallé has had to reject fifteen tours abroad because of fares, including a coast-to-coast tour of the United States. Other Governments transported their permanent orchestras abroad without charge.'

A few days after Crickmore's important revelations in Edinburgh

the representatives of Britain's permanent orchestras met in London to prepare a report on their finances, which will form the basis of representations for increased grants, to be made to the Arts Council and local bodies. After the meeting David Webster, chairman of the Orchestral Employers' Association and general administrator at Covent Garden, said that the lives of some orchestras would be threatened in a year or two unless something were done quickly. He thought that it was extremely unlikely that orchestras could meet the recent pay award out of receipts. The Crickmore and the Webster statements, and the latest indications of serious impending if not actual crisis in the orchestral world underlines, and confirms the implications of the argument in this chapter.

What Britain needs for its permanent orchestras, as Kenneth Crickmore has constructively suggested, is a full inquiry by an independent national committee into the whole question of public subsidies for music. *Moreover, I am convinced that what is also fundamentally needed for Britain's permanent orchestras is a National Five-Year Plan.*

The Arts Council should convene a meeting of the Local Authorities who subsidize their respective orchestras to decide on an equal subsidy for each, to operate for a period of five years. At the end of that time the situation would be reviewed and the subsidy for the second instalment of the Five Year Plan calculated on the average of the operational results of the subsidized orchestras. The result of this would be that an orchestra that had been more successful than the others would have money in hand to spend on foreign tours and other forward-looking projects; and the least successful orchestra would have a strong and tangible inducement to improve upon its achievement and make its participation in the second period of the plan more worthy of its aims and potentialities. I do not see why this sane and friendly competition in high-level music-making should not greatly benefit all the orchestras concerned—not to mention the public who support their activities—and, in the end, at least diminish the need for contributions from public money.

No competent and public-spirited orchestral management regards a subsidy as a bonus for laziness; and no fair-minded person would approve of even the indirect penalization of exceptional success resulting from brilliant leadership and skilled organization.

Let me recall the pith of the Arts Council's argument on subsidies:

'The purpose of a subsidy is to make ends meet—and perhaps leave a bit over; its intention is, manifestly, not to help the recipient to increase his deposit account while purporting to live on the dole. . . .'

It is not disputed that that is the policy the Arts Council has to adopt and apply; that that, in short, is what the Treasury or the Government—the name is immaterial—believes. No doubt local authorities also share that view. Accept it and there is no need for further argument. But must it be accepted? Should it be accepted?

It is possible to regard an orchestra completely as a business proposition. It succeeds or it fails; it pays its way or it doesn't. The proposition I am putting forward is that, although you cannot ignore business considerations, equally you cannot deal with an orchestra only in those terms. It is not as if an orchestra were an end in itself. No one keeps an orchestra for ornamental purposes or just to have around the place for company. Nothing could be more tangible and even tactile than a collection of musical instruments. I have never thought of, say, a tuba as an ethereal projection or a mere idea in the cosmic consciousness. Yet nothing could be less tangible, more ethereal than what the tuba and his colleagues produce. That production involves artistic and intellectual factors which no annual balance sheet can pin-point or total. Is your orchestra to be judged as a 'business proposition', or a music-making phenomenon, or both? An orchestra may thoroughly fulfil the Arts Council's requirements of making ends meet and yet fail woefully to fulfil the purpose for which it was created and which alone gives any justification for the ends meeting. If the subsidy has no relationship to the end-product of the orchestra

what is its use? The designed purpose of a haberdashery business is (a) to make ends meet, and (b) presumably to leave a bit, and rather more than a bit, over. The ideal to which an orchestra is dedicated is to produce a performance—a re-creation—of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor as faithful to the composer's expressed thought and intention as is humanly possible, and to transmit to its auditors the fullest realizable essence of that immortal document. If not that, then the orchestra might as well pawn its instruments and take over the haberdashery.

I suppose one could indulge in a fascinating metaphysical game trying to discover at what point the 'little bit over' ceases to be monetarily moral and becomes financially reprehensible; at what trembling moment in the delicately poised scale of public subvention a subsidy ceases to be a legitimate benefit and becomes a demoralizing bane. The distracting temptation is to be resisted, except to point out that the admitted acceptability to the Arts Council of a small surplus does reveal a chink in the armoured logic of the Council's case, not that the light that escapes through it is either illuminating or blinding!

There could be interminable arguments—and possibly acrimonious ones—about the comparative efficiency or inefficiency with which orchestras are managed. But what, I suggest, is not disputable is that a competitive stimulus to the orchestras would be good for everybody. Such stimulus would be provided by the knowledge that fine musicianship and efficient management would not only not be penalized, but, instead, would be rewarded. Are not those who best help themselves most entitled to help from others? What the Hallé has done for itself established an incontestable claim to treatment at least on a par with that meted out to other orchestras in the country. It may not be realized that the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra, which, regrettably, failed to survive, had received from the Leeds Corporation alone a subsidy of £30,000 per annum, in addition to varying sums from other local authorities. Surely that solitary fact is enough to emphasize the unfairness of the Hallé's treatment.

Subsidies in general have often been attacked on the ground

that they bolstered up the inefficient and the undeserving—financial crutches for those unable to walk by their own unaided strength. The Hallé does not ask, nor does it need, such crutches. What it is entitled to ask for is that its hundred years of service to music should now ensure that it will be able to shape its career freed from the devitalizing burdens of money worries, and from the disappointing necessity of having to set aside ambitious projects because of insufficient funds.

Do not let us forget that the Hallé, though a hundred years old, is a young orchestra, as one glance at it will reveal. Its conductor is a young man, and a young man who looks a young man. It is not easy to realize that Sir Charles Hallé had been dead for four years when John Barbirolli was born; and that Barbirolli was only two years old when Richter was appointed conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. Both for its pulsating youth and its honourable age Britain's orchestral centenarian deserves and commands our fullest loyalties and our most generous practical support for its future.

Envoi

'Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory . . .'

In the memory.

A composer's work is preserved in his scores. It is still 'there' even when it is not performed. The genius of the painter and sculptor is enshrined in visible and tangible form. The dullest author is able to show you his lucubrations encased by hard durable covers. Even the most platitudinous politician may achieve at least more than a brief life for his banalities in newsprint and Hansard.

But an orchestra, however famous, projects its life into the ambient. Its greatest performances, unless captured on gramophone records, live only in the memory of those who hear them. When we try to recall outstanding interpretations during the variegated experiences of our concert-going years, do we not discover how the erosion of time and the accumulation of other crowding impacts combine to blur the retrospective aural picture? What, in detail and idiosyncrasy, can we honestly recapture? Similarly, the conductor's work dies in the moment of its birth. The maestro's *Pathétique*, like the actor's *Hamlet*, falls on the air and is gone. It is into this vast evanescence that the executant musician pours his art. He cannot call back the winging note, he can only fashion it again. Yet no creation of the human spirit commends, at the best level, a more devoted and agonizing striving after perfection.

For a hundred years this has been the *raison d'être* of the Hallé Orchestra. Its century is the ineluctable monument to its invisible creations. Its next century will be the culmination and the crown of a similar dedication—if our homage and the gratitude of a nation derive from a deeper and more helpful appreciation than a momentary surge of congratulatory sentiment.

Many people, whose names may not figure in this chronicle,

have given in the past, as others give today, selfless and honourable service to the Hallé, whether in positions of importance and responsibility, or as members of the anonymous host without whose unfailing support the story of this great orchestra would never have come as far as this rewarding climax of public honour and artistic attainment. They deserve all praise, especially at this hour in the Hallé's musical history.

I am both glad and proud to offer this humble, but sincere, birthday tribute and greeting. What opinions are expressed in this book are entirely my own. I am happy to absolve my Hallé friends, official and unofficial, from conductor to programme seller, from any association with, still more from any responsibility for, them. As I wrote at the beginning, I claim no consideration as historian or critic, only indulgence as a life-long enthusiast. I am one of the Hallé's happy debtors and devotees, and shall continue to be. In the grand company of those who share my memories of yesterday, my pride in the festive present, and my hopes for the future I want for the Hallé even greater glories than now adorn its gleaming escutcheon.

For though its past glows behind us with the steady light of its vindicating triumphs, 'What's to come is still unsure'.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to make the following grateful acknowledgments:
Sir Charles Hallé: Life and Letters. Edited by his son, published by Smith Elder.

John F. Russell's articles, 'A History of the Hallé Concerts', published by *Hallé Magazine*.

John Barbirolli. By Charles Rigby, published by John Sherratt and Son.

The Orchestra in England. By Reginald Nettel, published by Jonathan Cape.

Penguin Books Ltd., for permission to reproduce Sir John Barbirolli's article on 'The Art of Conducting', first published in *Penguin Magazine* 2 (1947).

Sir John Barbirolli, for similar permission, and for the Foreword.

Mr. Kenneth Crickmore, Secretary and General Manager, Hallé Concerts Society, for invaluable advice.

Mr. George Knight, editor *Hallé*, for most useful suggestions and information.

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